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# TROPICAL SKETCHES;

OR

REMINISCENCES OF AN INDIAN JOURNALIST.

BY

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

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# TROPICAL SKETCHES;

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE SEIKHS AND THEIR FOUNDERS.

ANY one who wanders much about Calcutta with his eyes open, will soon be struck with the fine manly appearance of the Seikhs as a body. Tall and well formed, they constitute unquestionably a superior division of the native community, physically regarded. They may be seen about the bazars and the native mercantile establishments with cotton garments, not always of the cleanliest, wrapped round their loins, a close-fitting jacket on their shoulders,

and a turban of red or yellow hue—a muslin cloth, in fact,—twisted carefully and neatly round the head. They stand, or lounge about, ~~squatting~~ on their heels, in easy attitudes of indolent repose, when unemployed ; but, busy, they exhibit far more of the bustling energy which the European naturally associates with the idea of labour than any other class of natives. Their features are, for the most part, good ; their complexion a shade lighter, perhaps, than that of the Bengallee ; their eyes dark and sparkling.

Look into that long native shop in the “Burra bazaar,” and far away in the gloom, you will see three of them squatted on their heels in animated converse. You are observed, and, in a moment, one of them darts upon you as if you were a lamb appointed to the slaughter—he has made you his prey. He warns you not to allow yourself to be cheated by lying shopkeepers, who puff their own bad wares ; he warns you that there is much villany in the Burra bazaar ; that if you want to dispose of your money to your own advantage, you have an opportunity in his shop such as cannot be met with elsewhere. His two

brethren join in chorus, and, between the three, you will not find it easy to avoid seeing, at all events, what is pressed upon you with so much apparent honesty of purpose and sincerity of confidence.

You meet with civility, politeness, and attention, when you have entered—there is certainly no individual living in Asia or Europe, who will treat you to more civility and polite attention than the Seikh when he is cheating you out of your money, or charging you only double what he ought to charge you for an article. You show that you know the prices of the goods, and his enthusiasm cools at once. It becomes, in that case, a mere business transaction, and he has nothing to do but to exhibit the article, and declare its value. Eloquence would then be thrown away. “Greenness” is the quality he adores most in his purchasers, and the more unsophisticated the customer the more attention and kindness may he be certain of receiving for his money.

No supercilious smile curls the lip of the energetic Seikh if you exhibit frightful ignorance; no ill-disguised contempt, such as makes you disposed to knock down the well-

combed and finely peruked individual that exhibits it when he corrects your ignorance in a London shop, blandly and serenely. The Seikh knows better. Be as ignorant as you please of the nature of the article, of its quality and price, and he will not let you leave his shop until he has persuaded you that you have displayed an amount of sagacity perfectly extraordinary, until he has so far flattered your self-esteem as to send you away rejoicing in your acuteness.

You make an absurdly high offer for something you know nothing about.

“Saheb sees that his slave is a poor man,” says the seller—the seller of other articles besides those of commerce.—“Saheb sees that his slave is a poor man, and knows that that quality cannot be bought or sold at that price.”

You protest that you know nothing of the kind.

“Then Sahéb must let poor man live,” suggests the Seikh.

You never intended they should not, is your reply.

“Then Saheb will take the other quality at that price, or give me twenty per cent. more for this,” he concludes.

You examine the other quality, and even *you* can see that it is villanously bad. Your perception of that fact puts you into a good humour—he sees that he has no nincompoop to deal with, you say blandly to yourself—and so you take the goods at a trifle below his suggestion. No line on his face is suggestive of the imposition he has practised—he merely observes, that as you have driven so hard a bargain with him in that instance, you ought really to take something more from him to make up for it.

This is merely the mercantile side of the extraordinary race. With their military ability, the British became feelingly acquainted at Ferozeshah and Chilianwallah—on the banks of the Sutlej and of the Chenab. Different as the Seikh is from either the Hindoo or the Mussulman of India, however, he is merely a descendant of ancestors of either community. Before the latter end of the fifteenth century there were no Seikhs at all. Education and early training alone have made them the people



they are—their physical advantages are due solely to the spirit of their forefathers, and to the high estimation in which they held every attribute or qualification of the warrior.

Even the history of India itself, fertile as it is in romantic incidents, and prolific of the sentiment of wonder, has no stranger page than that which records the rise and progress of the Seikhs from the first preachings of a peaceful ascetic, to their military renown under Runjit Singh. They grew almost side by side with the British in India, until want of subordination and military misrule brought the two nations into collision—unprovoked aggression on the one side, and stern resistance on the other, ending in the overthrow of the aggressors, and in the loss of that kingdom, which the military successes of so many kings had helped to consolidate.

Nanuk, the founder of the earlier and peaceful community, was born in the year 1469, about sixty miles from Lahore, in a village called Maree. His birth, like that of all eastern founders of new systems, was said to have been miraculous, having been prophesied by a *fakir* of great sanctity and renown.

Of the early years of the extraordinary child we hear much that is surprising, if not incredible. He seems, naturally enough, to have been attached to the class of which one had foretold his birth, and to have been extremely fond of them; so liberal, indeed, that his father by no means approved of it, for, although he was ready to give all honour to the fakirs for having given him a son, he had no intention whatever of paying them constantly for it, when that son had grown up to be a promising boy. These fakirs wander all over India, leading the erratic lives of religious mendicants, and often imposing, to an extraordinary extent, upon the unsuspecting villagers. Women assist them most, and women are most deceived by them.

Anxious to wean his son from a religious life, the father of Nanuk prepared a shop for him at Sultanpore, and stocked it amply with merchandize. But Nanuk thought he was born for higher things than buying and selling—he felt an impulse within him which he had no desire to control, an impulse urging him ever on to that religious life which his father so much dreaded, and from which he would not

be diverted. His mercantile affairs were by no means successful. Looking upon the fakirs as the servants of God, he invited them to visit him as often as they pleased. They did not take a fancy to anything in his shop which he was not quite ready to part with. One walked off with one article, another with another, by Nanuk's own desire, and, when his thrifty father came to visit him and to see how he was getting on, he found a beggarly array of empty shelves, and little or no money to account for it. In fact, one would almost be disposed to sympathize with the poor man, had he said, "The fakirs gave you to me, they may take you again." But he did not. On the contrary, he spoke kindly to his strange son, excused his want of knowledge, declared that his *forte* was evidently not money-making, and did, in fact, all that he could do to set him at his ease.

He might have spared himself the trouble, Nanuk was perfectly at his ease already. Nothing that he had done had given him the slightest uneasiness—he was quite prepared to do the same again, if he had the opportunity.

“Nanuk is evidently not made for shop-keeping,” argued his father, “he shall live at home with us for the future, and we will look out for a wife for him—he will surely not give her to the fakirs.”

A wife was accordingly proposed to the passive Nanuk. “I will marry her,” said he, quietly, “if it is your wish, O my father.”

It *was* his father's wish, and, like the most dutiful of children, Nanuk was wed. His wife was informed by his father of the strange predilection of her husband for the fakirs. She took her measures accordingly, that they might no longer seek out their old friend as they had done before. Things were evidently altered at Nanuk's; there was *no* longer a cordial reception for them and a hearty invitation to partake of the best of everything, carrying off what they could not consume. No, it was all changed, though Nanuk remained as kind to them as ever.

For a time the 'musing youth was satisfied with his new life. In the blandishments of an affectionate wife—in the enjoyment of domestic happiness, he forgot, for a time, the religious life which he desired so ardently to live, and

which he had resolved on living. It was, however, but for a time, and, when a few months had rolled away, and novelty given place to satiety, repose to *ennui*, he suddenly left father, mother, wife and home—left them all, never to return. He had ever been accustomed to much musing, and they thought little of it for a time, but when day after day rolled away, and no Nanuk returned, father, mother, wife, all became alarmed, and sought the truant everywhere.

He was in the jungle with the fakirs. He was soon found, for they had a strong suspicion of his intentions. The commands of a father were ineffectual—he would not return. The caresses of a wife were next tried in vain—she hung affectionately upon him; he was not to be moved. She even wept, and Nanuk was still obdurate. It was too much; female equanimity could stand it no more.

“Hard-hearted monster!” she exclaimed, “I have been too good to you, unfeeling as you are. You do not deserve the treasure of a loving, faithful, but too-indulgent wife.”

“I do not,” said he, quietly; “be loving and faithful to me no more.”

Had he been made of marble, he could not have treated her affection, her grief, her rage, more coolly: She could make nothing of him, and, feeling no desire to take up her abode in the jungle and surrender all the comforts of home, returned at length to his father's house, to console herself, in due time, with another husband.

Nanuk was now formally devoted to what he had always looked forward to, as his future career—that of a religious devotee and ascetic; the life of him who has renounced the world and its occupations to pass his earthly career in study, meditation, and the instruction of others—a fakir. Not a fakir of the miserable, disreputable class that hang about the large cities of India, living in idleness and filth on their reputation for sanctity, and pretending to reveal the future to confiding and duped women, to whom they promise many children, not always without an effort to render their prediction true; but a member of a far more decent community, who disdain the filth and entire nakedness of the impostors alluded to; who really devote their time to study and meditation, who really reflect on life and on the

future, on the good and on the true ; whose piety is something more than a pretence, whose religion is a real living principle in the mind, not a hypocritical show without.

Nanuk did not content himself, however, with simple study and meditation, as many of his class do. He became a teacher and a preacher. He preached indifferently to both Hindoos and Mussulmans, urging the former to put away their images and idols, their mutilations and human sacrifices, their hideous and obscene rites, whilst he impressed upon the Mussulmans the absolute necessity of discarding that fiery spirit of intolerance, that thirst for infidel blood, which forms one of their chief characteristics, or rather did then form one of them.

His doctrines, as a whole, were those of pure Deism. He recognized all the prophets that had gone before him—he honoured Menu and Muhammad, Budha and Confucius, he merely added himself to the number, as the latest, and by no means the least noble illustration of the class. He was eminently an eclectic philosopher, and had faith in human nature besides. An eclectic philosopher, however, he was, with some of the prejudices of his

Hindoo race still clinging to him ; for, whilst he preached peace to all mankind and reprobated all intolerance, he had no mercy for the slaughterer of a cow !

To *us* a strange dogma, a strange dogma truly, this of Nanuk's about the cow ! but *we* were not born in the Punjab ; *we* have not been taught Hindooism by fiery fakirs ready to spill their blood before our eyes to prove the truth of their convictions—ready to thrust an arrow through their tongue, if you doubt their sincerity ! It is not a man's mind alone that shapes his convictions—it is not his reason only that guides that mind,—we are all of the age and country in which we live,—formed, fashioned, moulded by the society around us,—ever sinking our own individuality in the waves of public opinion—conforming to social practices in which we see nothing but absurdity—upholding social doctrines, of which we see neither the utility nor the necessity. Let us cease to wonder then that the benevolent Nanuk, who so ardently and eloquently preached peace amongst all mankind, should have regarded the killing of a cow as the one crime that could not be forgiven.



He would not believe in the depravity of man. He was of those who saw God in man as well as in nature, and he could not persuade himself that where God dwelt all could be evil and disordered. He rejected, therefore, absolutely, the doctrine of a fall and the necessity of an atonement. The religious systems of the East are divided into those two great classes—the sacrificers and the non-sacrificers; those that believe an atonement is necessary of some kind, and has been offered or may be offered daily, and those who reject sacrifices altogether, and trust in man's unaided powers to attain the good and the true. Where they have believed atonements necessary, they have sacrificed oxen, sheep, or men, as in Druidism, Magianism, Hindooism; where they have ignored atonements altogether, they have placed their faith in the hand or in the heart, in the sword or in the doing of good.

Muhammad endeavoured to combine the two; Gotama Budha, Confucius and Nanuk trusted solely in the latter. The first class of faiths saw God nowhere, or thrust him to such a distance that the poor sinner had no access to him but by the stepping-stones of

priests and altars, temples and sacrifices ; the second saw God in everything, and most of all, in man. Verily, the lying spirit of untruth has led poor man a strange dance after salvation—a far stranger dance than any will-o'-the-wisp has done, ever yet seen or fancied!

We may learn from it all, however, one useful lesson, which is this—that religion is a real want of, and necessity for, the heart of man, not a foreign device thrust upon him from without, by any means. God is too far off, says the Devil, for you to have anything to do with him—that is *his* atheism ; God is within you, is everywhere about you, all is good and excellent if you will only will it so—that is *his* pantheism ; and, between the two, all mankind oscillate and vibrate, now verging on the one, now pressing towards the other. Even the truth itself has been twisted, so as to accommodate itself to the one fallacy or the other, in all ages.

At Rome, God is too far off ; priests, saints, virgins, confessionals, and convents are necessary as stepping-stones, and in the contemplation of the medium, the end is lost sight of. In Germany, neology teaches, with its

open-mouthed and honest-looking eclecticism, that God is within us, that all is God, and therefore all must be good ; as to mediators, or *a* mediator, it laughs at the idea—sees no necessity whatever for any such !

The unity of God was the doctrine that Nanuk most urgently insisted upon, and was most zealous in preaching. Muhammadism taught that doctrine, and he showed from the Hindoo Vedas that they taught it likewise ; here, then, was a common basis, a foundation laid for a system to combine the two.

“ I am sent,” said he, for he always insisted, like all earnest men, that he had a mission from heaven to fulfil, “ I am sent to the Mussulman, to reconcile your jarring faiths, and I implore you to read the Hindoo Scriptures as well as your own ; but reading is useless without obedience to the doctrine taught, for God has said no man shall be saved except he has performed good works. The Almighty never thinks of asking to what tribe or sect a man belongs, but only what he has done.”

Peace, peace with one another ; peace with

all mankind, was the doctrine which he ever opposed to the hot-headed spirit of Mussulman aggression. Place your reliance on God, said he, for every thing, and live in harmony and love with each other, and then you shall be saved. He acted up to this doctrine, too, throughout his whole life; he accumulated no goods, had no private property, every thing was shared with his followers, he had all in common with them.

One can easily understand how the constant reflection on the evils caused by civil strife and religious animosity had led a naturally benevolent mind to such conclusions as these. He saw a thousand evils springing from hatred and broils; remove these causes of disquietude, he argued, and all will be well. The fallacy was one which has captivated other minds besides Nanuk's—a fallacy that can only tell upon the benevolent and the amiable.

“A hundred thousand Muhammads,” he exclaimed, on one occasion, “a million of Brahmas, Vishnus, and Ramas stand at the gate of the most high. These all perish—God alone is immortal. Yet man, who joins his

fellows in praising God, he is not ashamed of living in contention with them ; verily the evil spirit has possessed him. He alone is a true Hindu whose heart is just ; he alone is a good Mussulman whose life is pure."

There was a loftiness about Nanuk's teaching, which was very imposing ; a sublime enthusiasm breathed in his words, that captivated his hearers. A poet himself, for he spent his leisure hours in writing poetry, he was fond of poetic expression and sublime imagery, proving, by some of his sayings, that there was a great soul breathing within him, yearning after the good and the true, the beautiful and the excellent.

"How darest thou, infidel," asked a zealous Mussulman of him one day, "how darest thou, infidel, turn thy feet towards the house of God?"

"Turn them, O believer ! if thou canst, where the house of God is not," was Nanuk's meek but sublime answer.

Like the Hindus, he taught the doctrine of metempsychosis, or transmigration of souls, almost in the very words in which Pythagoras and his disciples had taught it so many

centuries before. Dogs and cats were the animals which the souls of the wicked should animate in future births, whilst those of the good should gradually climb the ladder of existence, attaining to Paradise at last.

## CHAPTER II.

THE ORIGIN OF THE SEIKHS—NANUK AND  
GOVIND.

Nothing could be more simple than the manner in which Nanuk wandered about, discoursing as he went. He gradually separated from the class of fakirs to which he at first belonged, and which he had loved so much in his youth—a change that brought upon him, of course, the violent denunciations of the more bigoted Hindus. Of that, however, he recked little. It was sufficient for him that he considered a course of conduct right or profitable, and he cared little then what the world might think about it.

He was, on one occasion, taken by the soldiers of Baber before that stern Muhammadan conqueror. Nanuk discoursed to him as he

discoursed to his followers usually. Baber was pleased and astonished ; so much pleased, indeed, that he ordered an ample provision to be made for the Seikh prophet's future maintenance.

“ O king,” replied Nanuk, “ know that I want no provision made for my future maintenance. I trust in Him who provides for all men. A man of truth and piety requires no favour at the hands of conquerors, nor will he consent to receive such.” He carried a rude tent about with him in all his wanderings, but it was usually under the shade of a tree that he discoursed to his followers, or sitting beside a wall. Unbelievers in his mission desired to see some miracle in attestation of it. “ I have nothing of the kind to exhibit,” said he, calmly ; “ the true teacher has nothing but truth as his sign. The world may change, but the Creator is unchangeable.”

But the followers of Nanuk were by no means pleased with this simplicity. They were dissatisfied that their prophet should call himself a Gooroo only, or teacher, and not a miracle-worker and a God, so they invented miracles for him in abundance. At eleven years of



age, say they, when he was one day tending his father's cattle in the fields, he lay down to repose. The sun's rays gradually became more and more powerful, and would have been directly upon the youth's face, probably inducing thereby a sun-stroke. A hooded snake of enormous dimensions crawled from the jungle, and spreading abroad its hood, stood erect by the side of the sleeping boy, thus shading his face. Some neighbours saw the unwonted spectacle, and went to tell his father. But it did not astonish his father, for his father never forgot that he was the gift of the fakirs.\*

Let us take another specimen of these traditions from his later life. Nanuk was one day sitting at the outskirts of a village, and seeing a man, Boda by name, feeding his cows hard by, he asked him for a drink of water, as he was faint.

"The water is at a great distance," said Boda; "but mind my cows, and I will get you some."

"There is a tank near," replied Nanuk; "fetch me water from thence."

"There certainly *was* a tank near," was Boda's reply, "but it is dried up."

\* Malcolm.

“Go and see,” rejoined Nanuk. Boda went, and to his great surprise, he found the tank, which had been some time dry, suddenly filled with water. He returned, of course, to worship the prophet, and to become a firm disciple, giving up cows, and family, and all, to follow him.\* But the legend does not end here.

Umritzir, or the water of immortality, was the name given to that tank in after-ages; a city was reared upon its banks, which is now the second city in the Punjab, retaining the name (Umritzir) which had been given to the tank on account of the miracle, and that city is at the present day the head quarters of the Seikh faith. In an island in the midst of the lake, which must have marvellously grown since then, is the sacred book of the Seikhs kept in a magnificent temple, and daily read to crowds of worshippers. The following is a description of the temple, taken from the “History of the Seikhs:”—

“The *Durbar Sahib*, as it is called, or great Seikh temple, is erected in the centre of a beautiful sheet of water, above the surface of which it is raised by means of a terrace. The building is a handsome one, and its lofty gilded

\* Macgregor.

dome and minarets produce a rich and dazzling effect. Surrounding this temple, and skirting the edge of the water, may be seen the stately mansions of the different Scikh chieftains. The entrance to the temple is by a flight of steps, which descend from one of the public streets or avenues ; before entering on these, every person is obliged to take off his shoes, even the king himself was not exempt. On reaching the bottom, there is a causeway leading to the temple, the door of which faces the north. This causeway is almost constantly crowded during the day-time with people passing to and from the temple."

One is almost disposed to ask here how they all get their own shoes and slippers again, or whether people ever go with good slippers on ; but our historian does not condescend to such points, and we proceed in ignorance :—

" On the ground-floor, opposite the door, sits the presiding Gooroo, or priest, clothed in white robes, and before him is placed the Grunth, or sacred book, which is open ; this book is constantly fanned by the priest, by means of a chourey, or yak's tail, which he keeps waving about, backwards and forwards.

The Grunth is placed under a small arch of gold tinsel, inlaid with precious stones, valued at fifty thousand rupees (five thousands pounds); the rest of the apartment is strewn with flowers, or covered with rich carpets. The doors and walls are gilded and ornamented, whilst the light descending from the lofty dome has a pleasing effect. Above this there are other apartments, with verandahs running round the whole circuit of the building."

So much for the great temple of the Seikhs, and for Nanuk's water-producing miracle. Did you hint a doubt to a Seikh on the subject of this miracle, he would doubtless exclaim, "Why, there is the water itself to convince you; go to Umritsir, and you shall see it," to him a convincing argument.

But even the production of a miraculous lake is by no means the most astounding circumstance related respecting Nanuk. He is declared by Seikh authorities to have had an interview with the Deity himself.

One day, say they, he heard a voice from above, exclaiming, "Nanuk, approach."

His reply was, "O God, what power have I to stand in thy presence?"

“Close thine eyes,” said the voice.

Nanuk did as he was commanded, and advanced. He was told at length to look up : he did so, and heard a voice exclaiming, “Well done,” pronounced five times, concluding with, “well done, Gooroo.”

After this, the Almighty said, “Nanuk, I have sent thee into the world in this the depraved age ; go and bear my name to it.”

“O God !” exclaimed the prophet, “how can I bear so mighty a burden ? If my age were extended to tens of millions of years, if I drank of the waters of immortality, and my eyes, like the sun and the moon, were never dim, still I could not presume to charge myself with thy wondrous name.”

“I myself will be thy Gooroo,” said the Almighty, “and thou shalt be a Gooroo to all mankind ; thy sect shall be great in the world, and I will forgive the sins of thy disciples. Thou must teach to thy followers three great lessons ; first, to worship my name ; secondly, to love one another ; thirdly, to practise ablution. They must not abandon the world, they must do ill to no living being, for into every being

have I infused life. It is a blessing to the world that thou art sent in this the depraved age."

Thereafter continues the account. "Well done, teacher; well done, Gooroo," was pronounced again by the Most High, and "Nanuk came to give light and freedom to the universe."

From all which it is abundantly evident that Nanuk's disciples had no intention whatever of allowing him to sink down into the character of a mere teacher, which alone he arrogated to himself, but were determined to place him on a level with the founders of other faiths, such as Gotama Budha and Zoroaster, as a miracle-worker and as a converser face to face with the Almighty.

He had fled from his wife and family in early life, to become an ascetic; but in the course of years he relinquished that profession, and strictly prohibited his followers from forsaking the world and their social or domestic duties. He found another wife late in life, and settled upon the banks of the Ravee, where he died at a good old age, leaving behind him two sons, whose descendants remain to this day. He was buried in great state by

his disciples, near his own residence ; a magnificent tomb was erected over his remains, and pilgrimages to it were frequent, until the Ravee rose higher than usual one year, and swept it away. He did not leave either of his sons as his successor, but a faithful disciple, in whom he had more confidence, named Ungut.

The precepts which the founder of the Seikh religion gave to his disciples as the rules of their lives and the laws of his faith, were collected into a volume called the Grunth, or holy book. Much was added to it subsequently by one of Nanuk's successors, Govind, who completely changed the character of the sect. Persecution had roused the spirit of defiance and opposition. The peaceful character of Nanuk's doctrines was forgotten, and the sect, previously harmless and benevolent, became one of the most warlike and cruel that even the annals of Asiatic warfare describe.

Nanuk himself is revered by his followers as a species of Deity. They have made him almost equal with the Almighty in the honours which they pay to his memory. Prayers are offered up to him as a saviour and a mediator, and thus, the whole fabric that he erected

has been grievously mutilated and altered. One "improvement" after another, one addition here and alteration there, have quite done away with the simplicity he advocated, and the comparatively pure doctrine he taught, until it is difficult to recognize the modern faith as that to maintain which the followers of Nanuk suffered so much.

In 1680, the tenth successor of Nanuk, Govind, the last of the Gooroos, became the head of the Seikhs. He seems to have been a man the very opposite in point of character and disposition to Nanuk. Proud, ambitious, cruel, he began his administration by summoning all the tribe to assemble and arm in order to revenge the death of his father, who had been beheaded by the emperor at Delhi. When they had assembled together, he addressed them in a speech which breathed far other sentiments than those which the Seikhs had up to this period been accustomed to hear from their teachers.

"My father ordered me to avenge his blood," he began, "and with this view I have collected a large army, but money is required for its maintenance. Now, my friends, every



one of you must prepare to obey my orders, and to contribute money. Secondly, you must be all of one mind, and adopt the same manners, and have the same religious belief. There must be no castes among you, as amongst the Hindus. You must be all equal, and no man greater than his fellow. You must place no reliance upon the *shasters*. You must not visit the sacred places of the Hindus, nor pay any respect whatever to their gods—to Nanuk Gooroo let your respect be paid, but to none else. The four castes of the Hindus are to be dissolved amongst you from henceforth.”

Thus did Govind begin a re-construction of the Seikh tribe, changing altogether its character and principles. Nanuk had taught his disciples the transmigration of souls; Govind said, “Not so, we are warriors now, we must not believe in any such doctrine.” The shedding of blood was no longer regarded by them as the greatest of crimes, nay, they soon came to regard it as the most trivial, for, throughout the entire subsequent history of the nation, the cutting off of heads is one of the commonest incidents recorded. The production of the head, indeed, seems to have been the ordinary

official intimation of the death of any individual.

There was good policy in much of Govind's reform. The destruction of caste, and the resignation of the Brahminical thread, the sign and symbol of one of the superior castes, was a politic step. It ingratiated the Seikhs with the lower castes, and brought a vast accession of numbers to their ranks, whilst they lost thereby but a few. When he exclaimed against the doctrine of transmigration, he was no less wise, for a belief in that doctrine leads naturally to a horror of the taking of life, and he was determined that henceforth the Seikhs should be pre-eminently takers of life — the cow still respected, however. *Its* life was sacred, but that of man was a trivial matter.

His next step was to select ten men from amongst his host, which now numbered twenty thousand—ten warlike men, pledged to stand or fall by him—and having administered an oath to them, he took upon himself the appellation of Singh, from the Sanscrit for *a lion*. Henceforth he was styled Govind Singh. But he did not confine this appellation to himself, he gave it also to his ten disciples, an honour

of course duly appreciated by them, whilst his twenty thousand followers were now first called Seikhs, a corruption of the same root, the name which their descendants have ever since retained—a name which, under Runjit, was the terror of northern India. Thus, in a few days, were the peacefully religious descendants and followers of the simple Nanuk transformed into a fierce military and political tribe, ready to assert their rights with the sword, and not afraid to engage in a contest even with the Emperor himself at Delhi. Two of the three primary duties which Nanuk had laid down as imperative on all, Govind wisely retained—the worship of the one God and daily ablutions. The third, love to all, was changed by him into love to our friends, hatred to our enemies.

In one striking respect Govind imitated Nanuk, or rather the bent of their minds led them to act precisely alike. They both despised wealth, and were ready to give it up without a sigh, or to share it with their followers. Govind's desire was to excite martial enthusiasm in the breasts of his followers, and in showing a contempt for wealth he was but

acting politically as well as in accordance with his natural bent.

Several strange anecdotes are told of him, illustrative of this contempt of his for money and precious stones. A Seikh from the South-East brought him two valuable bracelets as a present, valued at £5000, and requested permission to buckle them himself on the wrists of the Gooroo. Govind allowed him to do so, but, on washing his hands shortly after in the river, he dropped one of the bracelets into the water, which was deep there. The Seikh heard of it, and hired a diver for 500 rupees (£50) to search the stream, requesting Govind to show whereabouts the bracelet was lost. The Gooroo walked with him towards the river, and, when they came near the place, taking off the other bracelet he threw it into the stream; "It was somewhere thereabouts," said he, quietly, and then turned away to walk back to his house. "The Gooroo does not value the gift," said the donor to himself, amazed, "I shall not search for it further."

That Govind was a bold, resolute, and courageous man the history of his life abundantly proves. For more than thirty years he was at

the head of the Seikhs, and nothing could be more various than his fortune during that period. At one time the leader of fifty thousand men, threatening the Great Mogul himself,—at another wandering, deserted, with only five followers, from place to place, obliged to disguise and deceive in order to save his life.

When reduced apparently to the last extremity, we find him addressing his few remaining troops thus—“ If we die, my friends, I shall be esteemed as a warrior, whilst your memory will be revered as that of heroes. If we conquer, the country will be ours. To die as cowards is base, to die as warriors is glorious.” Obligated at one time to eat beef in order to prove that he was neither a Seikh nor a Hindu ; and imposing laws, at another, upon all the neighbouring princes and governors, he passed those thirty years in a series of alternate elevation and depression, such as even the history of Indian sects scarcely parallels.

He died in 1708, at the court of the Mogul Emperor, some say by his own hand, being weary of life. That he completely changed the character of the Seikhs is a fact fully at-

tested by the history of India—he found them a peaceful, charitable, benevolent community, he left them a fierce military people, daring, cruel and revengeful. He was one of those few heroes who write their own character on a nation, stamping it ineffaceably upon the hearts of thousands, just as the die leaves its impression upon wax or upon the hardest metal alike. A century and a half after Govind Singh, we find the Seikh people powerful, formidable, rich, brave, and courageous; disputing the very possession of India with its foreign lords, and that with so formidable an amount of vigour and ability, that it was for a time doubtful whether the vast resources of the Company would not be insufficient to repel them. Govind Singh himself could not have animated them with a nobler courage than they then displayed, although there can be little doubt, had *he* been then their leader, the contest would not have been so speedily and decisively ended.

For nearly a century after Govind's death, the Seikhs were still battling for existence and for power with the Mussulman rulers of the Punjab, and it was not until Runjit Singh be-

came the ruler of Lahore in 1799, that this supremacy was doubtful no longer. The history of the world scarcely contains a stranger chapter than that which relates the rise and fall of the Seikh dominion—its rise from Nanuk to Runjit, its fall from Runjit's death in 1839 to the British conquest of the Punjab. It took three centuries and a half to attain its culminating point—in seven years afterwards it had become nearly extinct! *Sic transit gloria mundi.*

## CHAPTER III.

## ROMANCE OF EASTERN STATE-CRAFT.

No history can look more like romance than that of the Seikhs, from the reign of Runjit to the invasion by the Sikh army of the British territory in India, during the winter of 1845. Not even in Eastern despotisms might such a train of quickly occurring conspiracies and revolutions, elevations and depressions, be expected to occur in the course of six short years. They remind one, indeed, of the exploits of a pantomime, in which the chopping off of people's heads is a joke, the cutting of their bodies into pieces a pleasant episode. The point of contrast, however, is plain enough. In the fictitious, the heads soon re-join the bodies, or are easily done without.



whilst the removal of the severed limbs seems to be but a relief to their temporary owners ; in the real, however, the heads once off, cannot be replaced ; the bodies once dismembered, we hear nothing more of the intriguing spirits that animated them.

During the entire administration of Runjit Singh, which lasted from 1799 to 1839, the Punjab was a prosperous, flourishing kingdom ; its revenues ample and constantly increasing, its power formidable to its neighbours, and itself therefore respected. Runjit was one of those uncompromising, white-bearded, turn-up nosed eastern despots, who, whilst they take their fill of all the pleasures that money and power can procure, yet know how to keep a firm grasp of the reins of government, and to wield with energy the unsparing sword of justice or polity. The Seikh nation required such a ruler, and willingly obeyed the man who proved by his firmness and ability that he was fitted to command. Like a fiery courser, that would unseat a timid ruler, but is obedient to a bold one, they bent their necks tamely to his yoke, winced at his un-

flinching severity, and admired whilst they winced.

He understood the posture of affairs, too, out of the Punjab—with that far-seeing eye of his, voluptuous in its full proportions, but powerful in its overhanging mass of shaggy eye-brow, he had looked deeply into the exact position of India. He had got together a great army, he had established a vast park of artillery, he was surrounded by French and Italian officers, who drilled his infantry, and who introduced European tactics into his army, men ready to take their oaths on the Bible, the Koran, or the Grunth—it was all one to them—that ‘the lion of the Punjab’ had but to will it, and the British should be driven from India.

He was surrounded by flatterers, who extolled his power and magnified his resources. He let them flatter, listened to what they said, catching the tones with one ear and letting them go with the other, as he smiled with the smile of a despot at their empty praises.

“I might drive the Ungreez Baähdor (the Honourable English) as far as Allyghur, but I should be driven back soon after, first to the

Sutlej, then out of my kingdom," was his reply, when he was thus importuned to give the order for the destruction of the foreigners.

Of the Europeans in his service, Avatibili, Ventura, and others, he made good use, whilst he paid them well. Cannon were cast in Lahore, his capital ; artillery-men were trained ; infantry and cavalry were disciplined ; but he took care that these Europeans should not get the upper hand, or become the leading-strings by which he, puppet-like, was to be directed. He treated them well, but kept rather aloof from them, not admitting any to much intimacy. They had money, women, command, but not political power—*that* was reserved for himself, and for those of the Seikhs whom he thought worthy of it.

To British emissaries who visited him, whether military or civil, he took care to display his military power. His salutes were fired from a hundred pieces of ordnance, whilst twenty thousand muskets rolled forth incessantly and unremittingly during the booming of the larger artillery. "They would fire better and more quickly if in presence of an enemy," he would carelessly observe to his

English visitor; “but, on the whole, that’s pretty well.” It was a part of his policy never to permit his European servants to hold commands in the artillery—they might be too dangerous there, he thought. The British have reason to know that this artillery of Runjit’s was by no means despicable, and thousands of Her Majesty’s and the Company’s troops, who rot beneath the sands of the Punjab, are dead witnesses of the fact.

It must be remembered, too, that these Seikhs, whom Runjit governed so well, were but the ruling race in the Punjab—that by far the greater proportion of the inhabitants were Hindus and Mussulmans. The Sikh faith endeavoured to combine the Vedas and the Koran into one harmonious system, and its earlier disciples were, of course, equally persecuted by the upholders of both. Thousands of them had fallen martyrs to their new dogmas, before they finally settled in the Punjab, and became its rulers. Considering then that these Seikhs, of whom Runjit was the king, were but the lords of the Punjab, with the vast majority of the population in serfdom, and ready to rise at any moment against

their rulers, there is all the more credit due to Runjit for the peaceable government which he established, all the more credit due to him for holding the Seikh in order with one hand, whilst he restrained the conquered native with the other. Such men do not often make their appearance in any country; still seldomer are they born to a throne. The subsequent history of the state proves how turbulent the Seikh chiefs or Sirdars were naturally—how ready they were to take advantage of the weakness of the ruling power to thrust forward their swords against that power.

It must be remembered, too, that Runjit was King when the British first came into collision with Affghanistan—that he was constantly urged then to attack them—to become the arbiter of India and of Asia. But Runjit saw much further into things than his shallow counsellors. He knew that it was but a small portion of the British power which was marching into Affghanistan—he looked behind the curtain, and saw large armies in Madras and Bombay, European regiments dispersed over the world, but which a powerful fleet could

soon assemble ; he saw all these things, and replied again, " I might drive the Ungreez Bahador as far as Allyghur, but I should be driven back soon after, first to the Sutlej, then out of my kingdom."

He had met two of the Governors-General of India, Lord Auckland and Lord Ellenboro', and he, doubtless, concluded that the latter, at all events, was not the man to succumb to a few difficulties at first, or to yield India without a struggle.

But though Runjit, with his firm arm and unquailing eye, kept repressed the military spirit of his people, or rather turned it into a proper channel in establishing a disciplined standing army, his successors were not able to do likewise. The Seikhs are, by early training and by religion, a military people. They regard the army as their natural destination, war as their normal condition. Their religion forbids them to adopt any other profession or employment than that of the sword, their early training unfits them for any other. Runjit's task was therefore all the more difficult ; and whilst our admiration of him is increased by this consideration, we must, at the same time,

feel less astonished at the disorder which prevailed after his death.

It is an essential talent in a great ruler to be able to discover the men best fitted for high office, and in this respect the ability of Runjit was conspicuous. Even when prostrated by paralysis, the result of intemperance and excess, his name was sufficient to govern the kingdom quietly; his name, associated with the administrative talent of those whom he had placed in important positions. Dhyan Singh was his Wuzeer, or Prime Minister—a prudent, cautious man, who found Runjit's name a tower of strength, and could wield the most turbulent spirits in the Punjab by pronouncing it, even when Runjit himself lay unable to utter a syllable; but, when the master-spirit was gone, Dhyan's ability was of little use. Rough men, that cared nothing for diplomacy, but much for warlike talent, started up then on every side, and the peace and quiet that had prevailed so shortly before, became changed into turbulence and discord. Nor is it to be supposed that Dhyan wanted resolution or courage; on the contrary, he was a perfect

hero, according to the rude ideas of those rude Seikhs.

The eldest son of Runjit succeeded him, a man resembling his father in outward form, but most unlike him in his mental constitution. For a short time he availed himself of Dhyān's ability, but only for a short time; and then, turning round upon his father's counsellor, dismissed him, and gave the premiership to a spiritless creature of his own. Dhyān was not a man to brook this, and, besides, he knew very well that this was no second Runjit that occupied the throne, so he marched boldly into the durbar one day, with his sword drawn in his hand. There was a something in his eye that told the new king he was not to be trifled with. Walking deliberately up to the favourite—the unworthy favourite, as all accounts concur in representing him—who was stupidly gazing at the intruder, and wondering what he could possibly want with his drawn sword in open durbar, Dhyān then and there smote him to the earth with one blow, cutting off his head with the second.

Rough and ready with their weapons were



those Seikhs ; far rougher and readier than suits our western ideas. The new king was alarmed, as well he might be, and surrendering the power into Dhyan's hands, shut himself up in his seraglio. He was dead within the year, not by Dhyan's agency, far from it. He was precisely the kind of king Dhyan wanted ; excessive debauchery shortened his days, inconveniently enough for Dhyan, who had all his work to begin over again.

The grandson of Runjit was now placed upon the throne, but the fates were adverse. Returning from the obsequies of his father on an elephant, just as he passed through one of the massive gates of Lahore, some stones from above gave way and crushed him to death, together with one of his companions. The circumstance appears to have been quite accidental, and probably was so, although one cannot help feeling somewhat suspicious about such accidents amongst such people.

The way was thus opened for a reputed son of Runjit (Shere Singh, by name) to ascend the throne, and notwithstanding the opposition of Runjit's widow, Shere Singh was placed upon it by Dhyan. This was in 1841. Shere

was distinguished by two ruling passions, a fondness for strong drink and a love of hunting. Before coming to the throne, these propensities of his had been conspicuous ; when he had actually become king, he gave himself up to them completely. Shere drank himself drunken, and, when he got sober, hunted that he might have the more zest for drinking again. Dhyan let him do as he liked, and governed the kingdom in his name.

For nearly two years did Shere enjoy his terrestrial elysium of hunting and drinking, whilst Dhyan ruled. But for only two years—nay, not quite for two years. Associated with him in all his excesses, there were two boon companions, whom the dissolute Shere loved amazingly. Their names were Lena and Ajeet. With their master the three formed a worthy trio, worthy of each other and of their company. But even the best of fellows will quarrel in their cups, and as Shere became more and more reckless, and more and more accustomed to do exactly as he pleased, on two or three occasions he threatened the lives of his dear friends, from whom, says one account, he was never separated, neither by night nor by

day. The drunken threats of a man who has the power of doing what he pleases, are, however, not to be despised, and Lena and Ajeet, at length thoroughly aroused, resolved to get rid of the tyrant before he got rid of them. Mark the finesse with which they wrought to this end.

To put Shere to death without Dhyan's consent would have been death to them, they knew. In order to gain this consent they dealt craftily. So one day, when Shere was in his cups, they got him to sign an order for Dhyan's execution. With this order, and the king's signature on it, in their hands, they came to Dhyan. First talking to him of all that he had done for Shere, of how he had put that unworthy debauchee on the throne and had kept him there, they raised a high idea in his mind of the gratitude which Shere owed him. To all this Dhyan assented, wondering, doubtless, what this strange preface was intended to introduce. They then hinted that the king was not grateful, that he hated Dhyan.

“Impossible!” exclaimed the premier ;  
“ why should he hate me ? ”

How could they tell; but the fact was indisputable.

Dhyan was still incredulous—he would not believe it. It is some shallow trick, doubtless thought he. The fatal order was produced. Dhyan examined it amazed.

Yes, it was the king's signature, there could be no doubt of that; but he evidently does not mean to act on it, said he, or the seal would be affixed as well.

“It is his intention to affix the seal,” they urged.

In that case I must be prepared for the worst, thought Dhyan.

An agreement was at once made between Dhyan on one side and the two friends on the other, that if the seal were affixed he should have timely notice, and Lena and Ajeet should be his friends forthwith, all three combining, of course, against the drinking and hunting king.

Delighted with the success of their stratagem so far, Lena and Ajeet returned to the king, apparently his dear friends, really resolved on his destruction. A promise was obtained from him that he should inspect

Ajeet's troops on the morrow. The usual feasting was commenced, to be succeeded by the usual drinking. The dancing girls were introduced as usual—all was mirth and gaiety ; the king in great vein, his two dear friends the most cordial of boon companions. At length drunkenness supervened as usual, also, but not upon Lena and Ajeet ; they had wisely refrained and continued sober, whilst Shere drank his senses into oblivion.

The propitious moment had arrived. " You forgot, most excellent king, to affix the great seal to this warrant," said Lena to the drunken monarch.

" O don't trouble me with business," exclaimed Shere ; " let me have more music and dancing. This brandy is—hic—hic—is fit for the houris."

The cups were replenished, the music and dancing resumed, Shere was fast relapsing into insensibility.

" But the seal, my gracious sovereign," suggested Lena, humbly. " Your slave awaits the seal."

" Lena, you're a plague—you'll lose your head some day if you teaze me this way," ex-

claimed Shere. "What's the name of that loose-bodied wench with the fine arms? Hoonda—hic—hic—Hoondawarra, to be sure. I'll forget my own name, next." So saying, the drunken king, leering upon the dancer, took his ring from his finger.

The execution warrant was legalized. The death of Dhyān commanded. Signature and seal, we have them both now, thought the conspirators, as the drunken king looked at them vacantly.

"What was—hic, hic—what was that warrant?" asked Shere.

"Only to order the execution of the slave that killed one of the hounds the other day. Don't you remember?" said Ajeet.

"I do—hic—hic—I do. And, hark ye, Ajeet. Let him be—hic, hic—let him be flayed—hic, hic—and I'll see it, I'll see it."

So saying, the king turned once more towards the fascinating Hoondawarra, who was exhibiting her utmost grace and her solid charms to the hazy gaze of the drunken monarch. In a few minutes he was in a lethargic slumber, breathing heavily. He was consigned for the night to the dancers' care—

the music gradually died away—the conspirators rose to seek Dhyan.

“We told you the seal would be affixed. Behold!” said they.

“There is no time to be lost, then,” said Dhyan, inspecting the warrant, and retaining it.

“Give us permission—an order in writing—and we will rid Lahore of the tyrant to-morrow,” urged Lena and Ajeet.

“I will,” said Dhyan, and in a few minutes the two king’s friends departed with the document they desired in their possession.

It was late on the following morning ere the king was prepared to fulfil his promise respecting the inspection of Ajeet’s troops. With two attendants, besides the conspirators, he passed out on horseback through the Roshnaee gate of Lahore, and, taking the road towards the parade ground, alighted near a garden in which were pitched tents belonging to his son Pertaub. The corps which Ajeet had recently enrolled was in the neighbourhood, ready to support its general should anything untoward occur.

Whilst Shere Singh was enjoying some re-

freshment in one of the tents, endeavouring, doubtless, to shake off the effects of the previous night's drunkenness, Ajeet produced a handsome case, containing a new English rifle, which he showed to the king, who was a connoisseur in such things. Shere took it, adjusted the barrel to the stock, and tried the sight.

"It is loaded," said Ajeet quietly.

The king handed it to one of his dear friend's attendants, who stood there for the purpose, telling him to fire it off outside the tent.

Ajeet gave the signal—the rifle was discharged, but its contents were lodged in the chest of the unworthy king. He had but time for a single exclamation, "What have you done, villain?" ere he expired, for the ball had been fired with fatal precision. Ajeet himself severed his master's head from his body.

But what was Lena doing all this time? He also had a head to procure. Shere's son, Pertaub, was at his devotions when Lena entered his apartments, for, unlike his father, he believed in other things than hunting and drinking. Lena's guards were in all the



avenues of the palace, the attendants of Pertaub were at a distance. Rushing suddenly upon him with his sword drawn, Lena slew and beheaded him. With the two heads, as witnesses of their obedience, Lena and Ajeet came to Dhyan, exclaiming, "My lord's commands have been obeyed—the tyrant and his son are dead—behold their heads."

Dhyan was by no means unaccustomed to such sights. He did not shudder, but he looked coldly upon the executioners. He had no further use for them, and would now shake them off, as he would shake off a couple of worms from his hand.

"I did not order the death of Pertaub," said Dhyan coldly.

"You would not have the young tiger live to revenge the death of his father," exclaimed they, disappointed.

"It was not right to murder Pertaub," he persisted.

"What would you have?" demanded the friends of Shere Singh. "What would you have? Who shall be king? What shall be our rewards?"

"There is no king now but Dhuleep, the infant," said Dhyan, coldly, walking off.

"Dhuleep shall be king," said they, "and you will be his minister and govern the country, and we—what shall we have?"

"You will be remembered as the murderers of Pertaub," said Dhyan, sarcastically, walking away.

But Lena and Ajeet were playing for a high stake, and were not willing to forsake it because danger stood in the way. Ajeet had a loaded pistol in his belt, his rage was inflamed to the utmost by the coolness of Dhyan, and, as the premier walked off, Ajeet took the pistol in his hand and shot the wise minister in the back.

The ruler of the Punjab fell dead upon the spot, he who had governed the kingdom wisely during Runjit's illness, and who had pulled the strings of the puppet Shere—he who had made Sirdars tremble and Affghans submit—he who had imbibed some of the spirit, and had naturally something of the same talent as the Seikh Napoleon, Runjit. Lena and Ajeet stood over the corpse of the prime min-

ister, the rulers of the Punjab for the time being !

Did I not say truly, then, madam, that this Seikh history is more romantic than anything I have previously related ? Did you or I see such incidents acted upon the boards of Drury Lane or the Princess's, should we not be disposed to say that they were rather improbable, that they were something of the nature of Adelphi extravaganzas ? When we came to see the signature and seal affixed by the drunken monarch, should we not have been prepared to say, ' It does very well for the theatre, but real life is a different thing.' Nay, madam, I do verily believe you would indignantly throw your opera-cloak over those alabaster shoulders on which the lights gleam with such imposing effect, and say it was " too absurd," as you threw yourself back (gracefully) upon your chair.

Yet these are the truths, not the fictions, of history. Runjit and Shere Singh, and Lena and Ajeet, and Dhyan were living men known to many still alive. The tragedies of Shere Singh's death and Pertaub's, of Dhyan's execution warrant and murder, are facts of his-

tory that have occurred within these few years back. There are thousands still alive who have known the men, and who remember the circumstances. Verily truth *is* strange—stranger than fiction, unquestionably.

It is a useful thing for society and individuals to see how the work of centuries may be destroyed in a few months of folly ; to see how speedily the kingdom that has been consolidated and strengthened by the labours of genius, and the efforts of successive generations, may be overturned by anarchy and misrule.

Let us pursue this history, therefore, for a year or two more—there is much to be learned from it every way.

## CHAPTER IV.

A LEAF FROM HISTORY—THE FALL OF THE  
SEIKHS.

THE infant Dhuleep, who had been mentioned by Dhyan, was the son of one of the wives of Runjit, and was born a few months before his reputed father's death. His mother vehemently protested, of course, that he was Runjit's son. The Sirdars who heard her smiled, and declared they were certain of it. Lena and Ajeet knew that even an adopted son of Runjit would be maintained upon the throne by the Sikh army; much more, therefore, were they bound to place upon it the son of Runjit's wife, whom all the world protested to be an infant very like his father.

Dhuleep was now four years of age—a fine thriving boy. His mother was from the hills, and had once been a dancing girl. In that

capacity she had so attracted Runjit's attention in his old age, that, greatly to the scandal of the faithful, he had married her, and, as she had the good fortune to give birth to a son just before his death, she was now the Ranee, or Queen Dowager, and her son was the Maharajah Dhuleep Singh. Both are still alive, though British cannon and British bayonets have driven both from the high stations to which Runjit's senile wantonness had raised them.

Lena and Ajeet began by placing Dhuleep upon the throne, and securing the favour of the Ranee. Ajeet aspired to succeed Dhyan as virtual ruler—doubtless the honour and the power were to be shared with his companion in intrigue. But there was a formidable obstacle in their way, which they endeavoured in vain to remove. Dhyan's son, Heera, was a favourite with the army, and with the European officers in that army especially. He was sent for craftily, but not until Rumour, with his hundred tongues, had busily proclaimed in Lahore that Shere Singh was dead, that Dhuleep was king, and that Dhyan was not at the head of affairs, as was his wont. Heera, therefore, refused to come, but, aware of the

character of the men he had to deal with, he hastened off for protection to General Avatibili's house.

Generals Avatibili and Ventura were the two principal European officers in Runjit's army. They doubtless knew well which side was likely to be victorious, and when they espoused Heera's cause, it must already have appeared promising. Whilst a portion of the army was marching upon the capital, with the European officers and Heera at its head, Ajeet had the Maharajah Dhuleep Singh proclaimed in Lahore as King of the Punjab, and himself as Wuzeer or Prime Minister.

With drums beating and colours flying, the army marched by the Delhi gate into Lahore, whilst Lena and Ajeet prepared to defend the fort. But troops and ammunition were both wanting. Lena was wounded in the first encounter. Ajeet saw that effectual resistance was hopeless, and endeavoured to escape. A Muhammadan soldier in Ventura's division saw him, recognized him, and pursued. Ajeet was not very swift of foot, but the soldier was nimble, and gained upon him. Perceiving that his legs could not carry him from the danger,

Ajeet tried his gold—taking off some rich ornaments which he had concealed about his person, he threw them to the Mussulman, begging him to spare his life.

The prudent warrior picked up the ornaments, and cut off Ajeet's head afterwards, taking it to Heera as a proof that his rival was out of the way. Rude fellows those Seikhs were—they were sure a man was dead only when they saw his bleeding head produced, not otherwise. But Heera ordered the body also to be brought, and after having it dragged, in Homeric fashion, through the streets, it was quartered—the pieces being hung up upon the different gateways.

A vigorous attack was now made upon the fort, and it was taken. Lena, still alive, was captured and disembowelled—all the male relatives and followers of the two conspirators were murdered—the women having their noses cut off, that they might no more captivate men, that the conquerors might be the last whom they should please! It is but right that these atrocities should be known. Let it be remembered that these things happened amongst one of the most highly civilized people in India,



and then let the question be answered, Whether the Christian people who now govern that country, are not responsible before God and the world for the use they make of their power? are not responsible for the education and the conversion of these races?

They are doing both gradually, does some one, ignorant of India, innocently exclaim. They are doing neither, I boldly reply, confident of being right, because I have seen what they are doing. The Indian Government neither educates properly nor converts—it extracts money, though cautiously, extensively, incessantly. It is a vast money-producing machine, and it keeps the country in peace—that is all it does. As to improvement, it is not an Indian term—it has no synonyme east of the Indus.

It was during Shere Singh's reign that the British disasters in Cabul had occurred; but Dhyan was then at the head of affairs in the Punjab, and, true to the policy of his great master, he refused to attack the English in the time of their disasters. Now things were changed. The Prætorian bands of the Punjab had made Heera prime minister, and they demanded money or plunder. The European

officers had no sympathy with the British, rather the reverse, and they flattered themselves that the army of the Punjab was powerful enough to make so strong a demonstration that all India would be in a blaze, if war became inevitable. At the worst, their fortunes were made, and much of them was already invested in France or Italy.

Of the adherents of Ajcet and Lena, Soochet, Heera's uncle, was one of the bravest, the most powerful, and the richest. Heera, after paying his dutiful respects to the infant king and his mother, resolved to get rid of Soochet, and to confiscate his wealth. Soochet seems to have been too unsuspicious for a Seikh, and, though warned of danger, refused to fly. He remained, and was murdered. His head was taken to Heera—it was the ordinary and official announcement of his death—and forty-five wives were burned with his body! But though the life of Soochet had been taken, his property was still in the possession of his family—they fled with it to the British territories. It was demanded by Heera from the British authorities, but they refused to interfere, for Golab, the brother of Soochet, was a

firm ally of theirs. He had learned prudence under the instruction of Runjit, and saw that things were now progressing towards a rupture. This same Golab, "who sometimes flayed his captives alive," says an historian, carelessly, was subsequently made by the British, King of Cashmere, and still rules in that lovely valley—the garden of Asia.

The British refused to surrender Soochet's wealth, and Heera doubtless let the soldiers know that they did so, for he was already in want of money. He had made large promises, and he required an ample exchequer to fulfil them. Soochet's wealth would have been a timely addition to his resources. It was useless, however, for Heera to remonstrate with the soldiery, or to protest that he lacked the means to supply their demands.

"Pay us what you promised," they hoarsely answered to his energetic remonstrances — "pay us what you promised, now."

"It is but reasonable," whispered the European officers, "that you should satisfy these brave men."

"I cannot," replied Heera, alarmed, "I cannot, at present, but give me time."

“Now, pay us now, or die,” shouted the soldiery.

“It is but reasonable,” whispered the European officers again ; “quite reasonable.”

Ileera attempted to fly, but was taken by the soldiers, and his head cut off. To whom it was taken history does not inform us, possibly Signor Avatibili or Monsieur Ventura could.

The choice of a Prime Minister now lay with the Ranee, and she, naturally enough, chose her brother, Juwahir, for the post—a likely man enough as times went, not unlike herself, ambitious, unscrupulous, pleasure-loving, and with a certain share of ability. But Juwahir was not a favourite with the army, the real ruler—the Ranee had evidently made a mistake in fancying that she was actually the prince ; she was so but nominally. The army did not like Juwahir, and they proved that fact to Dhuleep and his mother, by killing him before their very eyes one day. Dhuleep wept at the sight, his mother swore, but to resent the injury would have been dangerous—they deplored it, and said nothing further. It was but a way those soldiers had of showing they did not like a man.

All eyes were now directed towards Golab Singh, the man whom the British afterwards made King of Cashmere, and who still reigns there—a crafty old fox, who can tell what way the wind may lay as well as a weathercock, and veer round no less suddenly; the prince of “trimmers.” He was, of course, deeply agrieved at the murder of his brother Soochet, to which the Ranee had been a consenting party. He was asked if he would come to Lahore, from his government in Junmoo, and assume the Wuzeership. He was quite willing to do so, on one condition, that “the power of inflicting capital punishment should be confided to him, without any appeal from his decision.”

That was a small matter; it was granted, and Golab, with his portion of the army, a considerable force, marched to the capital.

He remained there not long, however; he saw that the commanding officers of the troops were resolved on invading the British territories, and the British were his good friends. It will be strange, doubtless, thought he, if, after they have conquered the Punjab, they cannot find some province for me to rule in-

dependently. He made the best use of his time, however, whilst in Lahore. He could not venture to put the Rance to death, but all the others who had taken part in the murder of Soochet lost their heads—whether on this occasion he flayed any of his captives alive, the Punjabee historians do not relate.

His rule was a short one; having finished the work he had appointed himself, he left a portion of his troops with the Lahore army, and returned with the remainder to Jummoo—he would have nothing to do with the invasion of the British territories, not he, and as to lending any assistance to the Sirdars, for that purpose, he had no intention whatever of doing so.

It is said that even the Rance herself was opposed to the invasion, but it was by her orders nominally that the army was assembled for the purpose. Tej Singh was regarded by all men in the Punjab as the best General they had, and he was appointed by the army to the command—even he is said to have opposed the invasion. After it had failed, there can be little doubt that they were all opposed to it—native officers as well as Europeans.

But Tej Singh did not hold the command alone—the Ranee had a favourite of her own, to whom she was very partial—his name was Lall Singh. Runjit had raised her from obscurity, and she had similarly raised Lall—the motive in both cases the same. Her object was to keep Lall Singh near her person as prime minister, but the army knew better than that. They would have Lall Singh to go with them—he was a sort of hostage for the fidelity of the Rance and her son. Tej and Lall were, therefore, the generals—the former the real Commander-in-Chief, the leader to whom the army looked up as its true General; the latter, nominally Commander-in-Chief, and by the favour of his mistress, dignified with the most sounding titles.

Under such circumstances and so commanded, the Seikh forces marched from Lahore, in November, 1845, towards the Sutlej, to invade the British possessions—to drive the foreign lords of India out of the country! Golab, from his distant government at Jummo; was indignant, and demanded why the Seikh government broke the existing treaty with the British, and whether the latter had

given any ground of complaint? The reply was, that he was not now at the head of affairs, and that those who were were not responsible to him—that he must send supplies forthwith to Lahore, and join the army with all his troops. He promised compliance, but delayed to yield it. The army was in too great a hurry to wait for the dilatory old governor, and marched off without him—he shall not share in the spoil, determined they, if he does not make his appearance at once.

He played a dangerous game, and won. When the army had marched off to the Sutlej, he was ordered to Lahore, and he came very submissively, but with force enough to protect himself against the few troops left there.

“You must join the invading army,” said the Rance to him.

“Of course, if your Majesty wishes it, I must,” he replied, “but, remember, then the Punjab will be wholly without troops—it may be invaded from the hills by the Affghans or the Beloochees, and what will be the result?”

“There is some sense in that,” said the



Ranee, completely outwitted—"there is, certainly, some sense in that ; remain then."

Golab obeyed. He returned to his government at Jummoo once more, and sent off messengers at the same time to the British, to inform them, that, for his part, he totally disapproved of the invasion, and had risked his head by opposing it ; that the army was enraged at his remonstrances, and the Sirdars furious ; that, in fine, no power on earth should compel him to march his troops against the British.

"Golab is an honest man," said the British authorities amongst themselves, "Golab is evidently an honest man ; he must be remembered when we come to divide the spoil, for he is our good friend."

Such was the posture of affairs in the Punjab, when a Seikh army of nearly a hundred thousand men, with two hundred pieces of artillery, crossed the Sutlej—to be driven back again at the point of the bayonet in total rout and with frightful slaughter a few months after.

It is an ill-wind that blows nobody good, says the old proverb ; and truly, this Seikh invasion was a great blessing to the news-

papers of India, for the times were dreadfully dull, and people were beginning to be tired of incessant editorial squabbles. The newspaper-editors and Golab were those most immediately benefited by the rash measures of the fanatical army.

We were expected, of course, by thousands of readers, to know all about the Seikhs and their religion forthwith. One correspondent wrote to ask why so many of them were called Sirdars and Singhs? another, who the Panches were, and whether they had anything to do with the individual whose treatment of his spouse Julia had often excited their indignation at home? A third asked the breadth of the Sutlej, and its depth at the place where the Seikhs had crossed? and whether there was any chance of their making their way to Calcutta? whilst a fourth informed us, in a mysterious manner, that the Seikhs in the Burra Bazar were thinking of rising and murdering all the English, requesting that we should take the first opportunity of acquainting Sir Henry Hardinge with the fact.

To answer all these questions, it was neces-

sary we should read up all about the Seikhs immediately. We read about them all day, studying Malcolm, Murray, Prinsep, Osborne, Lawrence, Thornton and the Calcutta Review, wrote about them all the evening, dreamed about them all night. Surely, the newspaper-editors, as a body, ought to have come forward unanimously for once, by way of curiosity, to thank them for affording new topics for discussion, just as all the old ones were becoming flat, stale, and unprofitable.

Like the rest, I read much about the Seikhs, and talked a great deal to one of them employed in the office—a peaceful-looking man enough—hence my gossip about them now.

## CHAPTER V.

## THE "EDUCATED" AND THE UNEDUCATED HINDU.

THE religions professed by the various inhabitants of the City of Palaces are as numerous and motley as the languages spoken and the garments worn. Of the various religious structures which arrest the eye in wandering through the town, the Christian churches are, certainly, the most imposing, the Mohammedan mosques are the most picturesque, from their innumerable minarets and Oriental domes, whilst the Hindu temples are massive, ugly, and extraordinary.

Hinduism, or Brahmanism, as it is variously styled, is, of course, the prevailing religious system in Calcutta, as in most other Indian towns. With all its absurd multitude

of deities, decent and obscene ; with all its contradictory dogmas and ceremonies ; with all its fine sentiment and fiendish practice, Brahmanism retains its hold, nominally at least, over some hundred millions of our race. A hundred millions of our race ! a hundred millions of human beings ! we talk glibly of such numbers when we come to speak of the swarming hives of Asiatic life, of the densely populated plains of China or of India, but it is no easy matter to conceive such multitudes, to form anything like an adequate conception of what a hundred millions of mankind really are. An aggregated mass of a hundred thousand is perhaps as great a multitude of mankind as we can form a distinct and definite idea of at once—an aggregated mass of a hundred thousand, such as thronged the aisles and galleries of the great Crystal Palace, in 1851, when every part of the building was full to overflowing—a thousand such masses, a thousand such congregations of a hundred thousand each, may serve to extend our ideas to the limits of a hundred millions ; faintly, however, and dimly at best.

Let us take a specimen from this living mass of a hundred millions, and see in what he believes for this world and the next. Stand forth, educated Hindu ! This man is of the highest caste — compared with other mortals he is of the finest porcelain, they of the densest brown earthenware. His white muslin robes set off his small figure well—his head-dress, a neat roll of the same material, is becoming and picturesque. Outwardly, there is nothing to complain of ; the tint of the skin is pleasing, not too dark, merely a tinge of brown, a slight tinge, that harmonizes well with the glare around, affording an agreeable relief for the vision. Were it paler, like that of the Chinaman or the European, it would appear sickly to the eye accustomed to the darker livery. His small hands and feet might be envied by many a beauty in England ; they are delicate, neatly-formed, eminently feminine in their proportions. The English beauty would not envy the colour, the light-brown tint, but all the Kalydors and washes of London or Paris will never make her hand of that shape, nor will they give it

that delicacy of touch, and smoothness of external surface, which are natural to his.

The countenance, too, is rather a pleasing one. Examine each feature in detail, and you will find that they are all well put together ; that eyes, nose, mouth, and chin, are admirably chiselled, yes, that's the phrase—all the features of a man's face are chiselled now-a-days, not well formed, or in proportion, but "admirably chiselled." Externally, I say, all is pleasing and agreeable ; but internally, alas ! the contrast is striking. This man has been "educated" by the paternal government of the East India Company. He has been an alumnus of the Hindu or Hooghly "college," and what is the result ? Why, nominally, he is still a Hindu—nominally, he still believes in the Vedas and the Shasters, in caste and Brahmanism, with its three hundred millions of gods, and in a salvation to be worked out by the most trivial or the most debasing practices. Yes, nominally, but in truth he believes nothing of the kind. This man has been "educated," I say, and has studied Shakespere and Bacon at "College," and what is the result ? Why, he returns to the world to uphold the

prejudices of his father's faith, because he finds it convenient for him so to do, and to believe in nothing but *rupees*.

Rupees are his deities now, and he would willingly have them as numerous as his Hindu gods. He laughs at Brahmanism with Europeans, he laughs at Christianity with Hindus—he hates Muhammadism—he has no faith, no religion, he believes in nothing that is elevated. And that solemn humbug, the Council of Education of Bengal,\* pronounces this man

\* “In 1842 the Committee of Public Instruction was superseded by the present Council of Education, consisting of civil servants of Calcutta of high grade, two natives of little influence, a judge of the supreme court, all unpaid, and a salaried secretary, who is, *de facto*, the council itself. This secretary is a striking illustration of the manner and the extent to which offices are heaped upon favourites by an Indian government. Besides being a member and the secretary of the Council of Education, and having, in consequence, to conduct the correspondence of all the colleges and schools under the government of Bengal, he is a Professor in the Medical College, the Secretary of that College, Government Book-agent, Inspector of Schools, and First Physician to the new Fever Hospital.” (Capper's *Three Presidencies*, p. 432.) In a recent review, the *Friend of India*, after quoting the above passage, admits that the statement



“educated,” and recommends him to go forth as a deputy collector, or a deputy magistrate to govern his fellow-countrymen, although he is without principle to guide his conduct, without a religious conscience to direct him !

The Hindu or the Hooghly “college” has removed from him the slight restraints his own religion imposed, and has given him no other to supply its place—nay, zealously excluded any other, taken excellent care that no other *shall* be given in its place ! Why, it is monstrous, do you exclaim, good reader—well, it is, at all events, quite true ; without a single principle to guide him aright, without any higher motive than his own interest to influence his actions, the youth steps forth from his “college” to be a débauché, and a magistrate ; a profligate character in domestic life, and an honest collector of revenue for the East India Company.

contained in it is true, whilst he endeavours to defend that prince of pluralists—the secretary. Well might the *Examiner* exclaim, in reference to the same officer, that in India only could such abuses exist.

Such is my excuse for calling the *Council* of Education of Bengal a “solemn humbug”—is it not sufficient, gentle reader ?

There is no use in taking such a man as a specimen of one of the classes. He is a specimen only of the "educated" Hindu; those who will not be allowed by that respectable old lady, the Council of Education, to believe in their own faith, and will not be taught any other—those who pretend to be Hindus in their own families, and will eat beef and drink brandy and water with their European friends—carefully trained infidels for the most part, who believe in no deity at all. We must have a specimen of a real Hindu—one who actually does believe in something more than rupees, in order to see what kind of a faith his is, and to what kind of actions it leads him.

We shall find thousands of such men in Calcutta. Here we have one—he is a Hindu merchant of the old school. *He* has not unlearned his religion in learning literature, and geography, and history. This man is a Hindu in more than name, and, horrible as may be his faith to our eyes, disgusting and revolting its practices, he stands on a higher footing than the unreasoning infidel, who believes in no God, and laughs at all systems. Faith is too high and holy a feeling for the mind to do

without altogether, and not lose completely its balance. The man who wholly wants faith is fit for all that is bad, for little that is good. He may be intellectually acute, intellectually cultivated ; but let him lose his faith in everything above himself, let him have no belief in the exalted, the noble, the true, the unlimited, and the mind retreats into itself ; feeds ever on its own resources, and comes to regard all other things but its own case and comfort, as matters too trivial for a thought. Self is the god of its idolatry, becomes enthroned on the altar of its judgment, and to that self, sacrifices are offered up a thousand times more horrible and debasing than even Brahmanism can inculcate.

Therefore it\* is that I look upon this old-school Hindu, with his prejudices and his want of enlightenment, as a superior being, morally considered, to the model semi-Hindu whom the Council of Education, in its solemn annual farces of examination and prize-giving, turns loose upon society, crammed with odd scraps of poetry, and a good deal of mathematics ; a man who can calculate an eclipse, perhaps, and yet is unable to perceive a God

in nature, because the Council of Education has not dared to teach him there is such ! In such a heart the sweet sympathies of domestic life cannot exist—the state in which such a man finds himself is wholly an abnormal one, and, like all unnatural things, must be a source of ever-increasing evil to all around.

But the poor unenlightened Hindu has been awaiting inspection some time. Let us come to him. With that keen eye of his, you may be sure the man is one who conceals considerable intellectual power under that simple and rude exterior. He appears to be wholly engrossed in his business, but he is watching us attentively, nevertheless, and wondering, too, what we can possibly want with him. This man, then, with his bare shoulders and uncovered legs, his spectacles on nose, and his old-fashioned *pugree*\* on his head, is a specimen of those who believe in Brahmanism, with its three hundred millions of gods. His sacred books are the *Vedas*, which he never reads ; they are left solely to the pundits, whose whole life is spent in the study of their

\* The Indian turban.

vast and complicated religious system. Of these vedas he has heard a great deal, but he knows little definitely. They are very voluminous ; they are written in ancient Sanscrit ; each of them—there are either three or four of them, for even on that point there is a diversity of opinion—each of them is divided into two parts, the one hymns and prayers, the other rules for the regulation of a religious life.

The pundits might have told him too, but they have not, that these vedas contain an infinitely purer system than they teach—contain explicit instruction as to the unity of the Deity, and far better teaching on a thousand other points than our old-fashioned Hindu merchant knows any thing about. The *Shasters* are the only religious books he has ever studied, and they are full of absurd stories about hosts of imaginary deities—deities whom the most unbridled Eastern imagination alone could suppose to exist. As to Brahm—the first principle whence all things proceeded—our old-fashioned Hindu knows little, and cares nothing about Brahm at all. He has heard that it was from Brahm that Brahma, and Siva,

and Vishnu proceeded; how, or when, or wherefore, are questions it is not for him to ask, or discuss.

This he knows, however, that ablution and prayer are the two things he has most to practise in order to secure a good position when, in some other form, he returns to earth. Moral duties he also knows he has to perform, and remembers that many sublime exhortations on that point are constantly to be met with in the *Shasters*, but he cannot help wondering why the gods were not more moral. However, that is a question that does not immediately concern himself, and he turns away from it to his own duties.

He is a strict observer of the requisite ablutions and prayers, although he knows that the people around him content themselves with crying out the name of their patron deity incessantly whilst they take their morning bath. But for him that is not enough, and oblations, ablutions, processions, festivals, study, he engages in all, and has faith in them all. He has a faint hope also of a Paradise to which he may possibly attain on quitting the world,

and before he has again to return to it—transmigration-wise.

He cannot look for the blessed state to which the *fakir* or devotee may aspire, but still he has a lingering hope that there is an account kept somewhere in which he has a heap of merit to his credit, far more than sufficient to counterbalance the moral derelictions into which he has fallen, and that when the balance is struck, there will be a considerable amount on the proper side. Besides, he purposes leaving a large sum to provide for the necessities of indigent Brahmins, and that, he trusts, will make an important item in his favour.

These *fakirs*, or devotees, he regards with especial reverence. Those of them whom he sees are men who have abandoned the world and devoted themselves to the practice of asceticism, and to wandering about the country in a horrible state of filth, their long hair matted into snake-like locks with mud, their naked bodies bearing the marks of their horrible penances, and their whole appearance suggestive to the European rather of insanity than of piety. In abandoning the world these men have often

little to forsake, so that, save in the penances which they endure—self-inflicted penances—they have little hardship to undergo, for all classes of the native community are anxious to assist them. The women, especially, ever the most benevolent and pious, crowd round the disgusting devotee, and minister to his wants with untiring devotion.

Some of these men will hold an arm aloft until it can no more be placed by their sides ; until it has become a stiff, wasted limb, ever standing up hideously and unnaturally, in rigid immobility. Others will clench their hands till the nails grow through the skin, and the fingers have lost the power of being straightened again. A knife, an arrow, or a thin sword will be thrust through the tongue ; or the insane devotee will stand on one leg, with his hands clasped above his head, his eyes fixed upon the blazing sun, in open, blinding gaze. These things require an amount of moral resolution of which our artificial life in Europe knows nothing. Such men must truly have strong convictions, however mistaken. We may be certain that they have faith in other



things than rupees, to endure such living martyrdoms voluntarily.

Our old-fashioned Hindu has a devout reverence for such men. He regards them as sure of Paradise hereafter, and wishes that he, too, had resolution sufficient to enable him to make some such sacrifices for his religion. These, however, are by no means the most horrible features of this horrible faith. Our old-fashioned Hindu knows that there is a huge Juggernaut's shrine in Orissa, sixty feet high, annually drawn forth on a massive car by thousands of men, women, and children, who regard it as a high and holy privilege to touch the ropes. He knows that numbers of devout people of both sexes will throw themselves—and do annually throw themselves—under the wheels of this monstrous idol, getting thus crushed to death, and staining the road with their blood. He knows that all this occurs, but he has never himself seen it. He has been a frequent attendant, however, on the *churruk-poojah*, or swinging festival, and would go to the great car of Juggernaut, were it within visiting distance, or were Indian roads more practicable.

This swinging festival is truly one of the oddest contrivances man has ever invented for getting rid of the burden of his sins. Not a whit more monstrous, it is true, than many other rites of Brahmanism—not a whit more cruel, and by no means so destructive to life as the great car of Juggernaut. But it is stranger and more absurdly ridiculous than anything else that even Brahmanism teaches its votaries to practise. Some rich native, our old-fashioned Hindu, for instance, determines on an act of merit. There is a particular season for this as for all other acts. It is the time then when swinging festivals are all the fashion, just as in England the children fly kites at one season and whip tops at another. Let us suppose the proper time has arrived.

Our rich native provides a place for the ceremony. A wide open space of ground is best, which can accommodate the thousands who crowd to the unholy rite. In the centre of this space a stout post, like a scaffold pole, is fixed firmly in the earth—it may possibly be twenty or thirty feet high, not under twenty, often above thirty, but most usually between the two. A strong bamboo pole is

fixed on the top horizontally—its centre resting on the top of the perpendicular post, and so constructed that it can revolve freely. A rope depends from either end of the bambôo, the one ten or twelve feet long, the other reaching to the ground. At the end of the shorter one hangs an iron hook, intended to be fixed into the back of the devotee. So far the preparations are complete. The wide open space is ready for the people. The perpendicular pole supports the horizontal bambôo with its two ropes dangling, one at each end. By catching a hold of the longer rope which depends to the ground, you can easily move the bamboo round. It revolves on the top of the post as on a pivot.

The devotee only is wanting now, and then everything will be complete, and the swinging can proceed at once. There are never wanting men ready to offer themselves for the purpose—let our old-fashioned Hindu prepare the T-like apparatus and a devotee will soon offer himself—although, in these degenerate days, he will expect to be well paid for his performance; at which evidence of irreligious avarice, our old-fashioned Hindu groans in-

wardly. The bargain has been struck, however—for twenty rupees or less, this unfortunate wretch will consent to have the iron hook affixed into the muscles of his back and to be swung aloft, and spun round and round by means of it until the whirling motion has rendered him well-nigh insensible.

He prepares himself for the performance, however, by partaking plentifully of stimulating drugs or liquors, which the master of the ceremonies, our old-fashioned Hindu, must provide.

Thus prepared—half stupified by the drugs or liquors of which he has partaken—the devotee enters the space prepared for the ceremony. He shouts when he sees the apparatus, shouts with exultation. The people have collected in great numbers, and they, too, shout vociferously. All is excitement; eager, anxious, “religious” excitement. A ladder is procured, and by means of it, the iron hook is passed through the fleshy part of the back—a band being also tied round the body and attached to the hook, lest the muscles should give way and the man be killed, when the English courts of justice might give the aiders

and abettors in the matter some trouble. In native states, however, and under native rule, I have been told that this band is dispensed with. The hook, I say, is affixed, and by means of it the man is suspended horizontally ; his head turned from the pole, his feet towards it. They do not touch it, however, being far removed—he hanging freely in mid-air. He endeavours to retain this position throughout, by keeping his body rigid. Round his waist is attached a small bag of berries, into which he dives his hand, in order to take out a handful.

Great is the rejoicing of the multitude ; vehement and exciting the shouts. The longer rope is seized by three or four active fellows, and they run round with it with all their might. The bamboo spins round on the top of the perpendicular post, and the devotee attached by the iron hook flies through the air, revolving rapidly round and round, centrifugal force sending him far aloft over the heads of the shouting multitude. As he swings he scatters the berries, and great is the crushing of eager men, women, and children below. These berries are sacred to them,

and of great virtue. Those who obtain them are preserved thereby throughout the entire year—their sins are forgiven, their merit is increased. It will not be difficult to fancy then with how eager an anxiety these berries are sought, how tumultuous the crushing to obtain them, how great the joy when they are obtained. The first hand that touches them is that the owner of which is blessed ; given by another they lose their virtue.

The devotee, as he whirls round and round with frightful rapidity, shouts madly with excitement. The young men who run round, dragging the other rope, and thus making the bamboo revolve, shout and yell horribly as they run. The people who see the devotee spinning above them shout vehemently as he appears above their heads occasionally ; and as a few berries fall around, all are excited, and the excitement is precisely of the same kind as that which fills the fields with groans and shouts when thousands congregate in America for religious exercises, during the enthusiastic and maddening “revivals of religion” as they are called.

The people see in that half-frantic devotee,

who whirls above their heads, a heaven-sent messenger—a blessed agent of good. They by no means see in him what we see—a half-drunken, half-mad, ignorant performer, who is paid so much for his horrible performance. Our old-fashioned Hindu smokes his hookah, and looks on with admiration at the entire spectacle. He is acquiring merit fast by the display, and who knows, may he not whisper to himself, but this act of merit on my part may be the means of securing me a good berth in another world?

To him, with his quiet rumination and self-satisfied reflections, that cager pushing of the crowd, that crushing and swaying hither and thither, as the sacred berries fall around, is by no means a disgusting spectacle. It is true the weakest have little chance, the strongest are almost sure to secure the largest amount of blessings for the year, but that is not his fault; it is of the nature of things, and they must be content. It is true that that poor woman, who so anxiously strives, despite her weakness and the precious burden she carries in her bosom, to obtain one berry, has little chance of success. The rough excited

crowd press upon her unfeelingly — she is driven hither and thither by its swaying, helplessly and hopelessly. She begs for mercy and for air in vain, for the excited shouts drown her cries, and every one is too anxious for himself to heed the anxiety or distress of one.

These are things our old-fashioned Hindu knows must be, but she is a Sudra, he would tell you, if you mentioned the poor woman's case to him, and Sudras have no right to attend religious festivals at all—they were intended solely to be the servants and slaves of the higher castes. At length the legs of the devotee fall ; his arms drop, he can no longer maintain his rigidity of body or his horizontal position. He has become an unsightly object—head, arms, legs, depending flaccidly, the back held highest aloft by the iron hook. He has fainted. The revolution of the bamboo ceases. The young men who hold the rope stand still and breathe hard. The devotee is taken down, and means are employed to restore him to consciousness and to strength. A few more stimulating drugs—an additional glass or two of arrack, and he is eager for the per-



formance again, nor will he desist until his strength has utterly failed, until he finds it utterly impossible to maintain, even for a moment, his horizontal position as he swings in mid-air.

Such is the *churruk poojah* or swinging festival! By such means does poor fallen man hope to propitiate the Almighty and to obtain pardon for his sins. A more monstrously absurd method was probably never invented by his irregular imagination—a more ridiculously nonsensical plan not even a wild-eastern imagination could probably invent. We can understand that sacrifices of other animals may be supposed grateful to the higher powers. We can understand that even the sacrifice of man may be regarded as acceptable, supposing the Deity to be a revengeful being like man himself; but what feeling could have prompted so ridiculous an imposition as that of the *churruk poojah*, it is not easy to discover.

And yet it is impossible, utterly impossible, to make a Hindu sensible of this absurdity. He sees in it nothing incongruous, nothing ridiculous. You argue with him about it, and he coolly replies, “Ah, Saheb, your ways and

our ways differ—your custom one custom, our custom another. All men not think same thing.” Anything more explicit or more to the point you will probably not draw from him by any amount of talking.

I was on one occasion spending the day at a friend's house in Calcutta. He was a missionary—a zealous, devoted missionary of the gospel. A *churruk poojah* was about being celebrated exactly opposite his house, in some waste ground that lay there. Everything was prepared—the promoters of the exhibition saw us watching them from the verandah. They doubtless thought we were admiring their dexterity, and were quite willing to help them to have the affair pass off satisfactorily. A ladder was wanting—a short step ladder, such as is used in houses for reaching to lamps and upper windows. We saw a respectable native approaching the house. He asked to be allowed to speak to the missionary. His request was, that the reverend gentleman would lend him a step ladder, in order that the devotee might be attached to the iron hook which was waiting for him !

Our friend's indignation at the request may

be more readily imagined than described. Yet to the natives his refusal was evidently incomprehensible. They regarded him as an arrant churl — perfectly acquainted though they were with his sacred character.

## CHAPTER VI.

## MINERVA IN CALCUTTA.

TOWARDS the end of September or the beginning of October, a festival is celebrated by the wealthy natives in honour of the Goddess Doorgah, the Hindu Minerva. There is no occasion on which the Hindu Rajahs and Baboos spend their wealth more freely, than during this Doorgah-poojah. Our old-fashioned Hindu friend would as soon think of allowing a day to pass without making his customary ablution, as of allowing the Doorgah festival to pass without its annual display. Feasting and merry-making form essential features of this ten days' carnival, but this feasting and merry-making are accompanied with a lavish expenditure for shows and dances, that

proves how much the Hindus are still under the influence of their old faith.

The house and its approaches are brilliantly illuminated with oil lamps, hung in various devices. In the central court, which is covered in for the occasion, the Rajah or Baboo receives his guests, and has amusements prepared for them. All his European friends are invited to the ceremony, for he is anxious to display to them his taste and wealth together. A monstrous image of the many-armed Doorgah stands on a raised platform at one side of the court, surrounded by a gilt halo or glory. Steps lead up to the sacred image, at the head of which a Brahmin stands sentinel, that no unhallowed feet may tread the sacred precincts of the goddess. Gaudy as paint and gilding can make her, Doorgah stands against the wall in unredeemed monstrosity, with her hundred blood-stained arms, to be sunk in the sacred waters of the Hooghly as soon as the festival is over.

It is nine o'clock in the evening ; the Europeans have had their dinner for the most part—half-past seven being the usual hour for that meal—and they now begin to appear in the

covered court-yard; admittance being obtained by tickets previously sent by the owner of the house. Crowds of natives block up the way outside, eager to see something of the shows—great is the crushing, overpowering the excitement. The master of the house goes from one to another talking, and laughing, amusing and being amused—he certainly seems the impersonation of happiness. An attendant goes round to sprinkle the guests with rose-water, or some other perfume—an agreeable and refreshing operation to all, where the heat is at times almost unendurable, and the odours by no means of the most savoury.

The nautch or native dance begins. A native female, accompanied by three or four musicians, occupies the centre of the court—a carpet having been previously spread for her reception. On a sort of drum, beaten by the fingers, and on a kind of flute or clarionet, the musicians play, accompanying the notes with their voices, whilst the nautch-girl attitudinizes. Her performance cannot be styled dancing, in our sense of the term.

She places one hand on her hip, and elevates the other gracefully above her head, ad-

vancing and retreating as she does so a step or two, and looking smilingly on all around. She draws her gold-embroidered muslin skirt aside, which hangs fully in front, to exhibit her ankles, easily seen through the thin fabric, whilst she disposes of them awkwardly or gracefully according to the taste of the beholder — awkwardly according to European ideas, for the most part ; gracefully according to those of the Hindus. In this attitude she turns rapidly round, or glides more slowly into her former position, allowing her skirt to take its natural position, and again bringing her hands into attitudes by no means devoid of grace—the musicians all the time yelling forth monotonous notes, and playing with frightful energy on their instruments.

The women of the household are, of course, not to be seen by the visitor's eyes, but they, too, are enjoying the merry-making, inspecting the Europeans, and watching the dancers from a balcony above, which appears to be wrapped up in cloth. Invisible to all below, they can yet see distinctly from their elevation all that goes on there. The nautch-girls are selected, chiefly for their personal charms,

particularly for their fine figures—the symmetry of which is fully apparent through the thin coverings in which they are enveloped. Many of them are almost as fair as Europeans, quite as fair, indeed, as an Andalusian brunette, and of the same rich tint of skin. Their hands and feet are beautifully formed—indeed, Hindu women generally, even of the lowest classes, have hands and feet which an English belle might envy for their delicate proportions.

Some of these nautch-girls are said to be women of good character. They get large sums for their performances, if eminent in their profession. I heard one of them—called the bulbul or nightingale, on account of her fine voice, rather powerful than melodious, so far as I could judge—who, I was informed, obtained five hundred rupees a-night, £50, for her performances.

During the dancing and singing, refreshments are handed round to the guests—the master of the house and his sons often officiating as servants on the occasion, to do them the more honour—refreshments consisting of sweetmeats, European and native, champagne,



cherry-brandy, beer, and soda-water. Of cherry-brandy the Hindus are immoderately fond, and even the Mussulmans are not proof against its intoxicating sweetness.

The amusements at the doorgah-poojah are by no means confined, however, to the exhibition of fine forms and the melodious utterances of harmonious voices—tumbling, exhibitions of *diablerie*, and feats of strength are not always excluded, although by no means so common as the nautch girls. I have even seen at the festival a troop of European equestrians performing their usual feats, of riding—in every possible way except that which is most easy and natural—jumping through hoops, dancing grotesquely on horseback, riding two horses at once, with such other performances as constitute the delight of little boys and girls at Astley's. And all this is in honour of the goddess! Verily her godship is easily honoured!

To turn, however, from this, the practice of Brahmanism, to its theory, is a grateful task. In the system laid down by the Vedas, we shall find no such horrible rites as those of Juggernaut and the churruk-poojah; no syste-

matic corruption and degradation of women enforced ; no practices permitted similar to those by which a Brahmin of high caste may support himself by marrying a great number of women of inferior castes but of rich families,—women who live with their fathers, whilst the husband visits them occasionally, receiving a handsome fee for the condescension—for such is the ordinary life of a poor Kulin Brahmin ! In the Vedas, I say, no such system is taught—these are the modern corruptions of a corrupt priesthood, who inculcate practices and principles that tend to the destruction, body and soul, of the devotees who obey them.

There can be no doubt, however, that the division of the people into four castes, of which one was to be servile, is an institution of primitive Brahmanism—an institution conjectured by some to have arisen from the conquest of the country by the three superior castes, and the degradation of the fourth into slaves. But the monstrous polytheism which forms so striking a feature of modern Hinduism, has certainly no foundation in the comparatively pure system of the Vedas. The

attributes of the Deity, as taught by those works, were thus summed up by a learned Brahmin—"Perfect truth ; perfect happiness ; without equal ; immortal ; of absolute unity ; whom neither speech can describe nor mind comprehend ; all-pervading ; all-transcending ; not limited by space or time ; understanding all ; the first of all causes ; the Creator, preserver, transformer of all things, such is the Great One."\*

In judging of the system of the present day, however, it is, unfortunately, that which is practically influential on the minds of the people that we have to consider, not that which was taught long ago by men whose teaching has become since a dead letter. It is not saying too much, perhaps, to assert—and it is in solemn sadness that I assert it—that there is no system of religion, of which we have any certain account, professed by any large body of mankind, so deleterious in its influence, so soul-destroying in its rites and ceremonies, so corrupt in its teaching as Brahmanism. The books which it would put into the hands of its youthful students are such as

\* Sir W. Jones.

no decent family in Europe could have read in the vernacular—such as were they literally translated would be liable to seizure by the police in England, and their vendors to punishment, as being injurious to public morals!

And yet this system, so gross in its teaching, so horrible in its rites, is patronized by the Government of India, whilst the missionaries who would uproot it and plant a purer faith in its stead, are coldly looked upon or openly opposed! This system, bad as it is, is even maintained in a Government Educational establishment in Calcutta—the Sanscrit College! and this Sanscrit College is under the direct control of the Council of Education in Bengal.

Surely, it is right that the people of England knew these things; surely it is right that those who permit and sanction such teaching should be called to account for their conduct. The following account of this college is from Capper's *Three Presidencies of India* :—

“ Connected with the Sanscrit College, there is no European officer who holds any appointment involving supervision and arrangement. On field-days, when some notability is ex-

pected—a *burra sahib* or influential personage—an imposing appearance is presented by this strange institution.

“ The ‘ Professors ’ of ‘ Vyakarana,’ of ‘ Sahitya,’ of ‘ Alankar,’ of ‘ Jyotish,’ and of sundry other things equally euphonious and intelligible, muster in great numbers; and, what with robes, turbans and ornaments, make a great display, looking solid, learned and profound, as Sanscrit ‘ professors ’ ought to look. The students repeat amazing quantities of unintelligible lines and sentences, and answer unintelligible questions with equally unintelligible replies. The *burra-sahib*, profoundly ignorant of the language used, is quite satisfied with their proficiency, bows to the ‘ professors,’ who bow in return, and then departs, delighted to be able to speak and hear his familiar English once more.

“ On any ordinary day the visitor will see, on a table in the midst of a small room, one of the ‘ professors ’ sitting in Oriental fashion, after the manner of tailors with us; his head is bare, his shoulders are bare; the day is hot, and the roll of muslin which envelops his body out of doors has been re-

moved; the ample rotundity of his stomach heaves regularly above the muslin folds which encircle the loins and thighs. The shaven crown of the worthy 'professor,' and his broad quivering back glow with the heat; whilst a disciple, standing behind him, plies the fan vigorously to and fro, and produces a current of wind that keeps the huge mass partially cool.

"Around the table are squatted numbers of dirty-looking youths, carefully enveloped in their muslin dresses, as prescribed by the rules, and droning, one by one, over a manuscript page, which is passed from one to another in succession. The majority are dozing, and well they may, for it is sleepy work—the same verses nasally intoned by one after another with unvarying monotony, and, doubtless, with similar errors. The 'professor' seldom speaks, for he, too, is dozing heavily on the table, anxiously awaiting the bell that is to release him to liberty and dinner. The same scene is being repeated in other rooms, where similar 'professors' are likewise dozing and teaching, and where other youths are similarly shut up."

Such is a picture of the Sanscrit "College!" in which, "whilst the Bible is diligently excluded, the religious books of the Brahmins are allowed to be studied—a College in which there are no European officers, but which is as much under the power of the Council of Education as any other educational institution in the country."\*

It is for the people of England to say whether such things should be—the people of England of all classes and sects, whether of the Church, whether Roman Catholics, Methodists, Baptists or Independents—it is a question in which, morally speaking, all are equally interested.

Let us turn, however, from this subject—one which none but the unfeeling can write about without being moved—let us turn to other faiths and other creeds. Next to Hinduism, Muhammadism is, perhaps, the most prevalent in Calcutta, numbering a very large proportion of the inhabitants within its folds. Muhammadism, however, is a creed of which the Eastern development becomes more and more impure the further it spreads from

\* Government Education in India, p. 23.

Mecca. The Malays of Java and Malacca are nominally Muhammadans, true Muhammadans in some respects—in their uncompromising hostility to other faiths, for instance,—in their lofty estimate of their own privileges, in their zealous anxiety to destroy idols and make their own prophet the supreme religious teacher. In these respects the Malays are true Muhammadans—but they have mixed up with their faith much superstition which he, whom they pretend to obey, would have rooted out fiercely with the sword.

The Mussulmans of India are chiefly remarkable for the rigour with which they keep the fast of the Ramezan—a terrible annual penance upon those obliged to labour under a burning sun for hours daily, or for a whole day together. During that fast, which lasts twenty-eight days, they must not eat or drink between sunrise and sunset. It does not always occur in the hottest seasons of the year, but, when it does, the sufferings of the labouring classes are intense.

Soldiers engaged in war, travellers on a journey, the sick, nurses and pregnant women are alone exempted from the rigour of this ter-



rible penance. Bathing is permitted if the head be not immersed, and that must doubtless be a considerable relief to those who are parched with thirst, but men involved in the trammels of daily labour cannot always get away to bathe, nor are they always where bathing is possible. Smoking and the smelling of perfumes are as strictly prohibited as eating and drinking during these fast days.

The sufferings endured during this fast by the labouring classes are much more terrible than those accustomed only to the moisture of a temperate climate can conceive. The sweltering sun is shining hot upon the poor labourer—the perspiration has been oozing plentifully from his exposed body—his lips and tongue are parched—he feels faint, feverish and thirsty to an extraordinary degree, but no drop of water must touch his lips till the sun, which has produced his distress, is gone. And yet these sufferings are submitted to by thousands, nay, by millions, of poor ignorant natives without a murmur!

The men who are capable of such self-sacrifice cannot be altogether vile, must, in fact, have something nobler within them than mere

animal desires and barbarous passions. A spark of the divine light which first lit up man's soul is found within them, even when that light appears outwardly to be wholly extinguished. This fast of the Ramezan is, like the penances of the Hindus, terrible and dreadful in its nature ; but this must be said of it, that it is not demoralizing in its tendency like the practices of Brahmanism—it is rather a lesson in self-control, in the restraint of self, difficult to learn doubtless, but not wholly without use when learned.

It is followed, of course, by feasting and merry-making. Booths are erected by the sides of the roads most frequented by the Mussulmans, in which sweetmeats are sold, preparations of curry and curry stuff of every kind, spiced meat and piquant delicacies, with coffee as a drink, for the most part. In the houses of the wealthy Moslems, too, shows and exhibitions are presented to the multitudes, who crowd them partly for the sights to be witnessed, partly for the good cheer to be obtained. The conclusion of the Ramezan in India is, in fact, the Doorgah-poojah of the Muhamminadan.

Like all other religions, however, Muhammadism is split up into two rival sects which detest each other—the Sheahs and the Soonies. Both equally hold with Muhammad, and profess to obey implicitly all that Muhammad ordained—they differ, however, in their opinions respecting the orthodox successor of the prophet. The Sheahs acknowledge Ali and his immediate descendants as the lawful successors of the founder of their faith—giving the name of Emauns to these successors. The Soonies regard the Caliphs, as Omir, Aboubekir and others, as the true leaders of the faithful, subsequent to Muhammad himself. There is little difference between the points of faith of the two sects, very little—it is a mere difference of opinion on an historical fact, yet because the more insignificant in its origin, it is all the more keenly contested now-a-days.

Sheahs and Soonies cannot meet at religious festivals without quarrelling. From words they come to blows—sticks, whips, ropes, missiles are snatched and brought into play, and the looker-on might fancy himself witnessing a faction-fight in Tipperary, or some other such favoured abode of civilization and

Christianity, were it not for the dark skins and the half-naked forms. Instead of "Hurra!" "at thim agin, boys!" "the dirty spalpeens!" "we'll lick them, so we will!" he hears such cries as, "Marro, marro!" "Salawallas!" "Soonnie, koob marro!" "Sheah marro jul-dee!" and such like. Ali and his followers are, of course, the patterns imitated by the Sheahs, whilst the Soonnies follow the example set by the Caliphs. In their respective methods of ablutions, and in their manner of bowing and prostrating in their devotional exercises, there are also some minor points of difference.

The difference between the two is, however, important in a political point of view, because each sect would rather league with the Christians against its Moslem rival, than with the latter against the Christians. It was but the other day, that a news-writer from a native court, that of Lucknow, wrote thus to the *Calcutta Englishman*:—"The war between Russia and Turkey engrosses the conversation of most natives, even here. The King and his court, who are Sheahs, all hope for the complete ruin of the Turks, who are Soonnies, and therefore held in even greater detestation than the Rus-

sian infidels.” So much for Moslem charity to Moslem !

The Persians too are Shcchs, and have therefore little sympathy with the Turks. In India the two sects are about equal in point of numbers, although the native courts are, for the most, Sheah. As a general rule, we might indeed assert, that western Moslemism, from the Atlantic to the Persian Gulf, is Soonnic ; whilst the eastern, from the Persian Gulf to Java, is Sheah.

## CHAPTER VII.

## THE LOST SCHOONER.

THERE were few Anglo-Indians in those days who did not, at some period of their career in the East, seek health at the Cape or in Australia. England denied to them, which they could not visit without sacrificing their situations in the Company's service, they preferred going to the Cape or Australia for a year or two, on sick leave.

When I first visited Cape Town, its Dutch aspect struck me at once most forcibly, as its peculiar characteristic. Founded by the Dutch, and in their possession for nearly a hundred and fifty years, it is no wonder that their air of solid stability and utilitarian massiveness should pervade its streets and public buildings. Your true Dutchman is a broad-

backed, stable, portly individual, not to be easily moved by common events, solemn and phlegmatic even when most enjoying himself—the Turk of Christendom—whilst your true Dutch *frau* is of large and massive dimensions, ample girth, particularly at the shoulders and hips, and steady, plodding, and formal gait.

Every thing Dutch partakes more or less of the same character. A Dutch lugger is a thick-set, squat, short-masted, broad-sailed vessel, that can be mistaken at a distance for nothing else, except, perhaps, an improved Chinese junk. A Dutch church is a massive structure, with walls six or eight feet thick, and not more than fifteen feet high ; its windows sunk deeply into the ponderous brick-work or stone, its benches made with such an evident regard to strength, that one would be disposed to regard them as intended only for hippopotamus-like individuals of equal width and length ; its whole air and aspect that of solidity without elegance, of disproportionate breadth without sufficient height. A Dutch town is exactly like the church and lugger, on a larger scale—wide streets (scrupulously clean, however), regularly

laid out, intersecting each other at right angles, shaded, if possible, with dumpy oaks and elms ; broad massive houses, of red brick or stone, and never more than two stories high, rise on either side, with here and there a public edifice, that looks like an ornamental gaol, with its broad turret, or angular spire, of so solidly square a base, as to defy earthquakes.

Such are the usual characteristics of Dutch colonial towns ; and those who have visited Cape Town, will not fail to recognize some of them as the most obvious features of that pleasant seaport. I trust I shall not be mistaken, but if one only smiles at anything ludicrous now-a-days, he is set down forthwith as wishing to bring down contempt upon every thing connected with it : let me therefore explain. In the first place, I have a profound admiration for much that is Dutch. This very stability, this massive broad-based perpetuity, is it not a thousand times more praise-worthy than the flimsy pasteboard, lath-and-plaster work of modern English towns ? And if the Dutchman *be* traditionally broad and massiye himself,—and so he is, and so he has been for ages, or Dutch painters, Van Ostade, Gerard Douw,



and Brauwer are not to be believed,—why should he not leave his impress behind him in Africa and Asia, a perpetual reminder to succeeding ages that he, Herr Holländer, has been there in times past?

It avails nothing, good sir, that you assure me Amsterdam is an elegant town, and the Hague a beautiful watering place. Unfortunately I have never been at either one or the other town, nor do I pretend to predicate any thing respecting them. I speak of Dutch colonial cities only, and those who have visited Cape Town, Colombo, and Chinsurah, will, I am sure, agree with me. Even when the Dutchman puts up a verandah before his house in a tropical country, he does it with a solidity unknown to other men, undreamt of by men in tropical climes generally. No flimsy pillar, however graceful, will satisfy *his* fancy; he must have an upright, downright, massive thick block of wood or masonry, that looks firm and immovable as himself; and as Herr Holländer throws himself back in his easy chair, with his never-failing pipe in his mouth, blowing cloud after cloud of the densest smoke from his well-filled cheeks, he eyes the pillar with gratula-

tion and self-satisfaction. It is an honest, steady pillar that, mutters he to himself, when he feels equal to the exertion of muttering any thing, and then he smokes again, contemplating it for an hour together silently.

From Fort Knokke—a Dutch fort, of course, as its name implies—from Fort Knokke the spectator can enjoy an excellent view of Table Bay. The fort is to the east of the castle, and connected with it by a rampart called the *Sea-lines*. Looking out from Fort Knokke, then, the idle Anglo-Indian may watch the troubled waters of Table Bay. Several vessels ride at anchor in the Bay, vessels from all climes, some of the larger visiting this half-way house between the Eastern and the Western world only to take in water and provisions, others coming close up to the jetty to discharge their cargoes and receive fresh ones.

At most periods of the year, but particularly in summer, that is to say, in December and January, the Bay presents a busy, cheerful, animated scene. Boats from the various vessels constantly pulling in to the town, manned by their own crews, or boats from the shore broader and more Dutch-like, for the most part manned with tawny, half Hottentot-

ish seamen, pulling out with supplies to the distant Indiamen.

The sun shines brightly, almost fiercely, upon the scene, but neither the European sailor nor the acclimatized Hottentot minds that. The spray glistens as the oars cast it off into the air to be reunited after a little with the abyss, the wind catches it before it falls, the sun illumines it, and sparkling, twinkling, shining prettily in the warm rays, it is whisked off over the sea far and wide. The oars descend again, the crew pull as one man, each bends forward, and draws back in unison with the others; the little ripples, with their white-capped tops, are cut through by the advancing bows, and a line half black, half white, behind, indicates the track that has been left—together as pretty a sight as the old liver-diseased Anglo-Indian has seen for many a day.

As he views it, and feels the fresh sea-air fanning his yellow cheeks, he thinks of the time when he, too, could enjoy such exercise and glory in it, when fresh muscular force demanded play and activity; but that time has long gone by, never to return, and as he mournfully smokes his hookah and watches

the dancing miniature waves playing with each other, like wanton children, he sighs to think of what he is and what he has been ; he sighs, as he asks himself whether lakhs of rupees can atone for a wasted frame and a diseased liver, whether poverty and health are not better than wealth and illness ? he sighs, and gets no satisfactory answer from asking never so often.

But when the westerly winds prevail in the middle of winter, that is to say in July and August—when the westerly winds prevail, and the long rolling surf comes bowling into the bay in huge masses, that follow each other eagerly and rapidly, then the scene is very different. There is now no warm sunshine, there are no pleasant rays tinting the white foam with their own many-coloured reflection ; no little wavelets dashing into each other's faces, and loud splashing as they dash ; no pleasure-boats making merry on the sunny water. Nature has thrown off her festive garb, and put on the robe of solemn sternness and gloomy mourning for destruction past and future. A heavy swell comes with incessant iteration from the South Atlantic, and bounding into the bay with unceasing regularity, threatens ships and

sailors with destruction. Chain cables are then required, and the large Indiaman, with eighty or ninety fathoms of the cable run out, strains uneasily at her anchors, as if anxious to be off into the open sea, away from rocks and treacherous coasts.

Best bower anchors and kedges will hardly hold the unlucky craft that has but rope cables, and her crew must stand by to lower another bower, should she drag at all. The wind howls dismally through the rigging and along the sides of Table Mountain, whilst the sea, black from the reflection of the threatening clouds, is evidently much disturbed by its raging.

It was January, however, when I was gazing upon the bay from Fort Knokke, and no such gales, no such dangers, were yet anticipated. A prettily-rigged schooner was standing gallantly into the harbour, and had reached the usual station of the large East Indiamen, when the sea suddenly rose. A black cloud came rolling from Table Mountain over the blue expanse of the sky ; and what had been all joy and happiness a few moments before, was suddenly changed into gloom and threatenings. The sea seemed to feel the change as much as

the seamen, and heaved tumultuously even before the strong western blast had arisen. Large waves came tumbling from the ocean into the bay in irregular succession—large waves, foam-capped, that broke but to give place to others, which followed with frightful rapidity. It was evident that one of those sudden storms so violent in their character, and so destructive in their effects, which sometimes visit the South Atlantic, was bursting upon the stormy cape.

The schooner, then entering—a little before so gracefully tacking to beat into the harbour—naturally attracted our observation. She was a sharp, long-hulled, rakish craft, that floated duck-like on the undulating water. Her master had evidently seen the approaching danger, and hastened to avert its effects. The canvas fluttered for an instant, preparatory to its being brailed up, whilst the schooner rolled uneasily in the chopping heavy sea. Down came the wind as if from a port-hole of the skies, raging furiously upon the agitated bay; down with especial fury upon the schooner, driving her, even without her sails, rapidly towards the shore. Her pilot had

evidently intended taking her farther in to a securer berth, but the storm was too violent to admit of delay.

Her anchor was cast out at once, and she swung round to it merrily, like a bird that sweeps against its foe. Another anchor was let go after a little, whilst all the other vessels that could get an offing, were standing out to sea to weather the gale, rather than trust the treacherous shelter of the bay. But the schooner had no means of doing so—she had neared the shore too much to admit of her wearing round and beating out. There was no help for her but in her anchors.

For a few minutes we supposed it was all right with her, as we gazed intently upon the surprised vessel, sympathizing little with the others, all of which were either secure in the neighbourhood of the jetty, or already standing out fearlessly to sea, where they might laugh at the storm. But the ill-fated schooner was by no means secure. All her anchors were evidently out, and she was still dragging, still drawing nearer to the dangerous lee-shore that wooed her to destruction. The heavy swell of the sea rolling in, mountain

upon mountain of water, drove her ever nearer to the land, and nearer to us as we watched her from Fort Knokke, whilst the wind howled dismally around, as if sounding her death-knell. It was an anxious time for the brave fellows on board the little craft—an anxious time truly, for it might be but the turning point between the life past and the eternity to come; the waves that surged and gurgled around them might be their graves, the howling storm their only burial service.

It was evident that the dangerous situation of the little schooner was perceived on shore, and that the harbour-master was doing his utmost to afford her assistance. A barge or lugger was launched with an additional anchor for her, and a life-boat, in case the former was unable to make the passage. Guns of distress were fired in rapid succession by the schooner, whilst on one side of her we saw the crew launching their long-boat.

It was evident they anticipated the worst. She still kept driving towards the shore, which here shoaled rapidly, every huge wave advancing her nearer to destruction. In the mean time succour was rapidly approaching; the



barge or lugger with the anchor, however, was obliged to put back, she narrowly escaped being swamped as it was, but the life-boat held gallantly on. The only question was, would she reach the schooner in time?—the only question for a few minutes that must have appeared ages to the anxious crew. It was soon all over, however. Drifting with every wave, with every blast, nearer the shore, the schooner at length drew near a portion of the bay, where the water shoaled almost immediately, from three or four fathoms to one, from one fathom to a foot.

To the crew on board it was no doubt an age of anxiety, to us watching keenly from the fort, it was over in a moment. The schooner's bottom evidently touched the sand or a rock beneath lightly—a heavy sea lifted her over in an instant upon her side. She turned—filled—and the next wave bore her, bottom up, dismasted and dismantled upon the beach, bore her there to play with her as the cat plays with the mouse, to cast her up for one moment and seize her the next, to let her go for one instant only that she might be caught hold of the following!

There was nothing at all extraordinary about the circumstance. Such things constantly occur. At the very moment when I am writing, or you, good reader, are perusing these lines, some gallant ship may be going down to the grave of vessels, sinking to rise no more, whilst the breathless carcasses of her whilom crew float away here and there, to be the prey of hungry sharks. This was only a small schooner, with half-a-dozen hands in her, no more! A mere trifle in the sum of human life which war, commerce, avarice, or enterprise daily offers up as its sacrifices.

“They are all drowned!” whispered an anxious voice, that sounded in my ear like the death-knell of the poor sailors.

“They are all drowned!”—under such circumstances, the simplest expression conveys the gravest meaning, suggests the saddest thoughts! And so it appeared, indeed, for the time being, gazing as we were from Fort Knokke most earnestly at the scene.

“They are all drowned!” I muttered to myself, as I looked at the wrecked schooner, faintly discernible as a black spot on the billow that was breaking over the beach.

“They are all drowned!” we whispered, as we glanced over the tops of the heaving waves, that rolled in rapidly in irregular succession.

We were too quick in our conclusion, however. In the valley between two of these large waves, the small boat of the schooner had been hid from our observation. The life-boat was up with her almost before she crested the huge mass of water that was advancing, and, before we had had time to lament the loss of the brave fellows, as they ought to have been lamented, we saw that they were safe. It was a strange instantaneous revulsion of feeling that—almost enough to make one laugh heartily, unsuitable as laughter was to such scenes and such emotions.

To see the gallant fellows whose loss we had commenced to mourn, safely borne over the waves by the life-boat, after we had felt sad at their fate, was enough to produce a strange commotion within us, and, as we drew a long breath—I and my companion—and watched the steady progress of the life-boat, we smiled, and said, “they are *not* drowned.” To *us* it was only a difference of word and a passing emotion—to each of the brave

fellows themselves, it was the difference between a life lost and a life saved !

My companion was an old Anglo-Indian, who had lived for twenty-five years in Calcutta—a specimen of a *genus* which the increasing facilities of travelling, and the alterations now progressing in Indian life, will soon render extinct. He had become so thoroughly wedded to the unnatural life which he led in Calcutta, that none other was tolerable to him. His servants and his iced claret, his rich curries and pillaws, his noon-day couch and luxurious naps, were to him necessities of existence. But however much the mind may accustom itself to such a state of things, the body soon proclaims feelingly that it is non-natural—that, in fact, it is all very fine, but won't do in the long run.

Illness was gradually making Mr. Kabob but the shadow of what he had been—he could not enjoy, as in times past, his iced claret and his prawn curries, and he sighed sadly as he found that things were altering with him—sighed mournfully at the want of appetite that showed his digestive apparatus was out of order, and would not be set right

without some great change. Where dinners are the great events of the day—the sole blessings worth living for—it may be fancied how sad the diner when he finds himself incapable of enjoying them; how grievous the conviction, when it will force itself upon the mind, that the great event of the day is a blessing no longer.

“Nothing but a complete change of air will do for you, Mr. Kabob,” said the doctors; “you must leave Calcutta and go to the Sandheads.”

Kabob sighed as he heard the sentence, nay, groaned rather. But he was a man of resolution, and so he said resolutely, “*I will go, doctor.*”

The “Sandheads” is the name given to the estuary of the Ganges, where it disgorges itself by many mouths into the sea. Pilot brigs are stationed there, some with lights to warn ships from the dangerous banks, some cruising about to supply vessels making their way to Calcutta with pilots. ‘To go to the Sandheads,’ meant, then, to remain in one of these pilot brigs, in the hope that the sea-breeze might blow him into health again. It

was to forsake his luxury, to give up all that he held most dear, and live in an offensive brig, where people would think nothing of disturbing him at night,—where men looked upon eating and drinking as altogether a secondary consideration !

“ I *will* go, doctor,” said Kabob, nevertheless, heroically ; and he *did* go. He was to have remained at the Sandheads three weeks at least, so said the doctors. In ten days after his departure, Kabob, like a tall ghost, made his way into my office, with a face of the yellowest ghastly hue, and an attenuated frame.

“ Kabob !” I exclaimed, in surprise ; “ back already ! why, I thought the doctors warned you not to return before three weeks were over, at least ?”

“ So they did, my friend,” said Kabob, choosing out the easiest chair he could find, and seating himself leisurely, whilst he put his feet on another chair that contained letters and papers in admired confusion—letters and papers from anxious correspondents, who were, no doubt, each hoping that the Editor was attentively perusing his or her communi-

cations at all events, whatever else might be neglected. Down upon sonnets, and the first five chapters of a new novel, written in an exquisitely neat hand; down upon facetious diatribes, and laughable expostulations intended to be grave and serious; down upon them all went Kabob's feet, for he knew their value.

"So they did, my friend," said he, as he seated himself; referring to the doctors and their commands; "so they did, but I could not stand it any longer; fowls and ducks one day for dinner, ducks and fowls the next; nothing but ducks, nothing but fowls, every day. 'I will die comfortably in Calcutta,' said I to myself, 'rather than live here in this miserable way.'"

It was true enough, absurd as it may appear, good reader. Good fare was with him the one thing needful, bad fare the one thing abominable, to be eschewed above all others. He preferred dying comfortably in Calcutta, to living "abstemiously" at the Sandheads—the abstemious living, be it remembered, consisting of good wines, fat ducks and plump hens in abundance. "But where are the side

dishes ?” asked Kabob sorrowfully, and so he returned !

However, death to be looked in the face is no joke ; and although Kabob had, in his sadness of soul, resolved to endure death in Calcutta rather than live moderately out of it ; yet, when he found that he actually *was* sinking, and that the cemetery in the Circular Road would certainly receive him if some sea-going vessel did not ; he magnanimously made up his mind to break up his establishment and depart to the Cape. Advertisements appeared in the Calcutta papers, stating, that in consequence of Mr. Kabob’s approaching departure from Calcutta, Messrs. Screwthem Tight and Co. had been instructed to dispose of his valuable household furniture, plate, horses, carriages, &c., &c., &c., by public auction.

It so happened that I had arrived at the Cape before Kabob’s departure from it. He was intimately acquainted with the commanding officer at Fort Knokke, and thus we had happened to be spectators of the loss of the little schooner, and of the gallant rescue of the crew by the life-boat.

An advertisement in the Cape papers the



following day informed the public that subscriptions would be thankfully received by Messrs. Roggeweld and Stallenbosch for the crew of the life-boat which had so gallantly made its way to the distressed seamen, and for the seamen and master of the schooner, who had lost all that they possessed. I showed the advertisement to Kabob, who was rich enough to have reimbursed them all, without feeling the expense himself.

“Very proper objects of charity indeed,” said the Anglo-Indian, “very proper. I particularly admired the courage of those fellows in the life-boat. It’s marvellous that men should risk their lives in that way for a few rupees.”

“They did it to save the lives of the wrecked seamen,” I urged, “not to get money.”

“And they *did* save them, and they’ll get money besides—which is all very right and proper,” urged Kabob. “I really do not think this claret is equal to what we had yesterday—it’s genuine Lafitte, no doubt, but still it’s not that first-rate quality that the other was. •It smacks of the cask too.”

“I’m going to send a small subscription for these brave fellows to Messrs. Roggeweld and Stallenbosch,” said I, “shall I put down your name for anything?”

“Of course you will,” said Kabob; “I’ll give the life-boat fellows ten rupees for their gallantry.”

“And the poor seamen of the schooner, that have lost their all?” I urged.

“Why, yes, as you say, they must be badly off—let me see, five rupees for them and five for the life-boat fellows, that’ll do;” and Kabob quaffed another glass of claret, as he formed the generous resolution.

I called on Messrs. Roggeweld and Stallenbosch, in order to gain some information respecting the unfortunate schooner and her crew.

“A very sad thing, sir,” said the clerk; “the poor fellows have lost all, and the islanders too; their whole year’s produce was in that schooner.”

“What islanders?” I asked.

“Why, you see, Sir, the schooner came from the Tristan D’Acunha Islands, and the men in her belonged to them. They come over

every year with their produce, and after disposing of it here, take back the few things they require."

"Indeed!" said I, as I walked away, after paying my subscription and Kabob's—"indeed!"

\* \* \* \*

There are few things that men are more disposed to conceal than ignorance. It requires a good deal of resolution to say—"I don't know anything about it," when your companion makes an observation that puzzles you.

"Strange that they should put a contralto and a soprano together," said a gentleman who was sitting beside a friend of mine at one of the concerts in Exeter Hall the other night—a friend utterly ignorant of the very elements of musical lore.

"Very strange indeed," was his reply, whilst he had no very definite idea as to what either a contralto or a soprano was, and, therefore, could not see, of course, why they should not be put together.

"Very strange indeed," was my friend's reply, as he looked into the face of the

gentleman who had made the observation to see that he was quite serious; he had not the moral fortitude to say that he really did not know what a contralto or a soprano was.

Do you think, under similar circumstances—supposing such an amount of ignorance possible in your case, good sir or madam—do you think, under similar circumstances, you would have answered more honestly—would you not mutter “Yes” or “Hem,” or some other unmeaning expletive of assent, rather than confess that you did not see anything strange in it? If you would say so—as, perhaps, nine out of ten would, from various motives—some not to give offence, some to avoid the appearance of ignorance, some to be polite—if you would, then do not be astonished that I walked out of Messrs. Roggeweld and Stellenbosch’s office without asking where the Tristan D’Acunha Islands were, or without informing the clerk that, up to that moment, I was profoundly ignorant of their existence.

Verily, human nature is a strange thing, and we, living representatives of that human

nature—you and I, good sir, you and I, good madam,—are strange people. Let me conclude with Shakespeare, however, “an odd man, lady, every man is odd.”

But although I felt my ignorance, and was ashamed of it, I had no idea of sitting down quietly under it and suffering it ; no, I made up my mind to rout it forthwith, not to endure it on any account.

## CHAPTER VIII.

THE EMPEROR NAPOLEON AND KING GLASS.

“THE Tristan D’Acunha Islands,” I muttered to myself, as I made my way that day through the streets of Cape Town to my lodgings in the suburbs—“the Tristan D’Acunha Islands, where *can* they be?”

I met Mrs. Dordrecht, my good landlady, on the stairs, as I made my way to my sitting room.

“Where are the Tristan D’Acunha Islands, Mrs. Dordrecht?” I asked.

Mrs. Dordrecht did not know—had never heard of them before—was not quite sure that such islands were in existence at all—smiled faintly as she replied, to show that she discovered some profound witticism in the ques-

tion, a witticism hidden from the eyes and understanding of an ordinary mortal like myself.

“You really don’t know?” I asked again.

“I don’t know,” said she, with the prettiest foreign accent, and as simply as possible.

“The Tristan D’Acunha Islands !” I exclaimed, as I threw myself on a couch, when I had reached my room, “where *can* they be?” The few books I had brought with me to the Cape did not include a Gazetteer, nor had the deceased Dordrecht, worthy man, left a Gazetteer amongst his books to his excellent spouse, now a widow, my landlady.

“I *must* discover where those islands are,” said I, putting on my hat, and sallying out again ; “how stupid I was, not to ask the clerk something about them.”

I bent my steps directly to the library in which I was accustomed to see the papers, and to chat with such idlers as presented themselves.

“Do you know anything about the Tristan D’Acunha Islands ?” I asked of the librarian, who daily retailed the gossip of the Cape to all quidnunc loungers.

No ; he did not know ; had some faint idea

that he had heard of such islands before, but where they were situated was to him unknown. We walked over to a map of the world that was suspended against the wall, but an inspection of it tended little to enlighten us on the subject. We found there, as usual, all sorts of names in large type, that every one knew before, but nowhere the mysterious islands which we sought.

“I have it!” said the librarian, clapping his hands.

“Where?” I asked, looking intently at Siberia, as I thought I saw him directing his eyes to that quarter.

“The Edinburgh Gazetteer,” said he, again, “will tell us all about them.”

“To be sure it will,” was my reply; and away we marched to search for the unknown shores in the pages of the Gazetteer.

Mr. Vangeyzel found it after a little.

“Tri, Trip, Tris; here it is, Sir, here it is—TRISTAN D’ACUNHA—there you have all about it,” said the benevolent librarian, delighted at the discovery, as he pushed the Gazetteer to me.

I read as follows:—

“Tristan D’Acunha, the largest of three



islands in the South Atlantic Ocean, about 1500 miles from any land either to the west or north, very lofty, and about 15 miles in circumference. Long. 15. 40. W. Lat. 37. S."

"That's all about them," said I, as I threw down the volume.

The map of the world was again referred to, and there, at the latitude and longitude indicated by the truthful Gazetteer, we found the Tristan D'Acunha Islands—south-west of the Cape, and nearer to the Cape than to any other land. I went to the Gazetteer again ; not a word more was to be discovered respecting them, than those which I had already read—

"Tristan D'Acunha, the largest of three islands in the South Atlantic Ocean, about 1500 miles from any land either to the west or north, very lofty, and about 15 miles in circumference. Long. 15. 40. W. Lat. 37. S."

Mr. Vangeyzel and I pored over the notice with apparently equal interest.

"It doesn't say a word about any inhabitants on them," I observed.

"Not a syllable," said Vangeyzel, as he turned over to the title-page. The study of the title-page evidently gave him a new idea.

“The Edinburgh Gazetteer,” he read out, “or Compendious Geographical Dictionary, containing a description of the various countries, kingdoms, states, cities, towns, mountains, seas, rivers, harbours, &c., of the world.”

“It says nothing about islands,” he continued, quite seriously, and looking me full in the face.

It was evident he regarded his discovery as an important one, for, receiving no answer, he reiterated—

“It says nothing about islands.”

“No,” said I, seeing that he was really *not* joking; “no, but the &c. would include islands.”

“Ah, to be sure, I never thought of that,” replied the librarian, puzzled again.

Next morning I went betimes to Messrs. Roggeweld and Stallenbosch’s office, to make further inquiry about the schooner and her crew, as well as about the Tristan D’Acunha Islands.

“I don’t know much about them,” said the clerk; “but I’m quite sure they’re inhabited, for they send their vessel over twice every year with wool, seal skins, blubber, and other arti-

cles too numerous to mention—that schooner as was lost as per advertisement.”

“Can you tell me where the master of that schooner is to be found?” I asked.

“Certainly, Sir, if you wish to satisfy yourself respecting the truth of the statement, and the entire loss of the vessel and cargo, you will find him at ——.”

The address was given, and in half an hour I was sitting in a private room in a public house frequented by sailors, with the master of the ill-fated *Enterprize*, for that was the schooner’s name, opposite to me. He was a dark, weather-beaten young man, who had evidently seen much service.

“Inhabited!” he exclaimed; “faix an’ yer honor may say that, an’ the divil a lie in it, anyway. Shure there’s near a hundred of us on that same ‘Tristan D’Acunha—there was eighty-six when I left it, and I suspect there’s eighty-seven or eighty-eight by this time.”

“You’re an Irishman, Mr. Brody,” I observed.

“An Irishman—O begor it’s thrue for you, but how did you come to know that at all at all?”

“By your language—there’s a touch of the brogue in it still.”

“Why thin, now, I dare say there is,” suggested Mr. Brody; “but it’s fifteen years since I was in the ould country, and isn’t it mortal strange that I should hould to the ould talk still?”

“And how long have you been in Tristan D’Acunha?” I asked.

“Ever since I was a spalpeen, the height of a capstan. My father was out on the island in Bony’s time and Mr. Glass’, and so you see that’s the way that I kem to be livin’ there—I was brought up to the say, so I was; and they made me masther of the Enterprize, so they did, two years ago, an’ if it hadn’t been for that infernal pilot (savin’ yer presence), I’d a been masther of her now, so I would.”

“In Bony’s time and Mr. Glass’?” I repeated. “Do you mean Napoleon Buona-parté?”

“To be shure I do—wasn’t he livin’ in St. Helena for six or seven years?”

“And Mr. Glass?” I asked.

“Oh, maybe you never heard of Mr. Glass at all at all?”

“Not a word that I remember,” was my reply.

“Well, now, see to that—isn’t it wonderful? Why, Mr. Glass was livin’ in Tristan D’Acunha when Bony was livin’ in St. Helena.”

“And who or what was Mr. Glass?”

“He was a corporal, so he was.”

“Perhaps Tristan D’Acunha was occupied as a military station then, by the British?” I suggested.

“To be shure it was, all the time that Bony was at St. Helena, and when he died they wanted to give up Tristan D’Acunha altogether, but Glass had taken a fancy to it, do ye see, an’ he sold out, so he did; an’ he got all his kith and kin to go with him, an’ my father among the rest, an’ there they are in the island now; an’ bad luck to me! but it’s me they’ll be shaking their heads at when they hear the beautiful schooner’s gone to the bottom, an’ all our fine wool and seals’ skins, and all the rest of it—O murther! but it’ll break the ould man’s heart, so it will.”

I was astonished at Mr. Brody’s account, and deeply interested in the information he had given me—the unaffected sorrow he dis-

played, not so much at his own losses as at those of the island, where every one had some venture in the little ship—all opened up a scene so new and striking, so different from what one sees every day, that I formed the resolution of seeing Tristan d'Acunha and its strange inhabitants with my own eyes, if I could.

Mr. Brody's account was strictly correct, as subsequent inquiries convinced me. There, far away in the South Atlantic, so far, that a vessel was seldom seen except an odd whaling ship, lay the strange islands. A company of artillery, with their wives, had occupied it when Napoleon was at St. Helena. Glass had been one of those soldiers—a corporal; and the desert island had taken his fancy so much, that he resolved, Crusoe-like, to live there all the rest of his days. Government aided him in his enterprise, and with his wife and family, as well as all of his friends that he could get to join him, he was taken back to his own island, fifteen hundred miles away from the nearest inhabited land.

It had never been inhabited before the soldiers had taken possession of it, but their occupation had somewhat prepared it for the

little colony. He landed in 1823 with six companions; they were all married, and there were amongst them eight children. In 1829, as I perceived from an official account I discovered at the Cape, there were altogether twenty-seven persons in the little state, seven men, six women, for one of them had died, and fourteen children.

In 1849, according to Mr. Brody's account, there were eighty-six inhabitants. Glass was still alive, the monarch of the little empire. Land was tilled; they had six hundred acres in cultivation; their cattle and farming stock had increased more rapidly than the inhabitants, for their original five oxen (four cows and a bull) had multiplied to a hundred; their dozen sheep had become three hundred; the swine and goats introduced by the soldiers were to be found wild all over the island. Every thing was prosperous, and, from Bródy's account, it was quite evident that Glass ruled them well. He had all the elements of the sovereign in him—nay, possibly has still, for he may be still alive—he was their prophet, priest, and king. They regarded him as the wisest of sages, whilst they loved him as a

father ; he had kept them in order, and they feared him with a wholesome fear.

A disorderly whaler was what they most dreaded, for the seamen of the whaling vessels had no respect for the property of others ; and for many years, when a whaling boat was observed making for the island, Glass and his companions were obliged to make off to the mountain which occupies half the island—a mountain eight thousand feet high—hide their cattle, their sheep, and their wives in its recesses, and then meet the unruly marauders to make the best terms they could for what was wanted. Delicious water abounds in the island, and a stray vessel would sometimes beat about in the vicinity, whilst a boat was sent on shore for such vegetables and water as could be obtained. At *this* period, however, the inhabitants were strong enough to protect themselves from any moderate boat's crew, but it was not so in times past ; and what they now delighted to see—a vessel approaching—they formerly dreaded.

I was so interested in Brody's account, that I introduced him to Kabob. The contrast between the two was amazingly striking. The



rough child of nature, fresh from the perils of the sea and from his rude island, where all was healthy work, hard work, too, and wholesome activity, and the luxurious Anglo-Indian, accustomed for more than twenty years to all that could gratify the senses, or could enervate the body. They regarded each other much in the same light as a modern city *belle* and an Indian squaw would regard each other, if an honest, hard-working, independent Indian squaw could any where be found now. Yet there were some lingering remnants in Kabob's mind of respect for hardihood and bravery, for enterprise and independence—he even went so far as to declare that Glass must have been a superior man *for his station in life*; as if, being a corporal, a superior man in that grade meant a quite different thing from a superior man in fine clothes, and with finer cloth on his back, and a different title.

So much was I taken up with Brody's account and with all I learned of those remarkable islanders, that I determined to visit them, if possible, and endeavoured even to induce Kabob to contemplate some such expedition. He regarded my intentions as slight indica-

tions of lunacy, gravely asking if the Cape was not bad enough? whether I thought Tristan d'Acunha could be much worse? if I really wanted something worse, why I did not make my way to Kamschatka? with sundry other equally facetious inquiries.

I felt convinced that the facts had but to be brought prominently before the public of the Cape, however, to secure a sufficient sum to enable Brody to charter a brig, and to stock it as he had been ordered before quitting the island. I called on the editor of more than one paper—myself an editor, I needed no other introduction. The power of the fourth estate was brought to bear upon the public benevolence. Moving appeals were addressed to the benevolent sympathy of a generous public, even from the editorial columns. The disappointment of the poor islanders—fifteen hundred miles away from any inhabited land—was feelingly dwelt upon; their heavy loss, and the years of toil which it would require before another vessel could be purchased by them; the misfortune of the brave master and crew, who had lost their all—these topics, and others equally suitable, were duly urged.

In the midst of political disquisitions on the policy of receiving convicts, and violent diatribes against the Home Government for wishing to force convicts upon the colony—in the midst of editorial squabbles and party perorations, these appeals to the public formed an agreeable resting-place, the neutral tint that harmonizes the strong lights, the pause in the action of the heroic poem that allows the anxious reader time to breathe freely.

The public was not deaf to the voice of their monitors. Engaged in a contest of no ordinary moment, though they were resolutely determined that their beef and their bread should not supply English convict ships and their guards, heroically disdaining present gains for future purity and freedom from contamination, they yet listened to the details of the poor islanders. Sympathy was excited. Money began to flow in. Great names headed the lists; the names of doughty knights and colonial honourables, each of which was a host in itself. In a fortnight, Mr. Brody was negotiating for a brig, the *Osprey*, then waiting for a commission. In a month his purchases were made; Messrs. Roggeweld and Stallenbosch, the agents of

the islanders, supplied him with all that he demanded, and there was still a balance to the credit of the charitable fund—a small balance, it is true, but still it must be remembered that money enough had been subscribed to charter the vessel for a run to Tristan d'Acunha and back, to purchase all that the islanders wanted, and to replace the clothes and personal property of the master and crew.

True, the schooner and its freight were gone—heavy losses for the poor islanders—but a large portion of that freight was represented by the goods taken out by the *Osprey*. A heavy loss instead of partial ruin. All honour, then, to the benevolent Capeofgoodhopians!\* They were in this case honest followers of the Good Samaritan.

\* What name is to be given to the dwellers at the Cape? They would disdain that of Africans; Capites is unpleasant, Capeofgoodhopians too long. The same may be said of Vandiemanslandonians, but they get out of the difficulty by calling themselves Tasmanians.

## CHAPTER IX.

## THE LIVING CRUSOES.

I TOOK my passage in the Osprey, bound for Glass Bay, in Tristan d'Acunha, Mr. Brody commander. Before I land, it will perhaps be well to give the reader some further information respecting the group of three islands called generally after the Portuguese admiral who discovered them in 1506, and of which the largest (not fifteen miles in circumference, as the Edinburgh Gazetteer affirmed, but nineteen or twenty miles) bears his name particularly. If the reader will but open a map of the world, and draw his finger westerly from the Cape, a little southerly too, but very little, he will come upon the group of three islands, which Tristan d'Acunha, the celebrated Por-

tuguese admiral, discovered when he was sailing to the East to assume "the Viceroyalty of the Indies."

It is not often that vessels doubling the Cape go so far south as these islands; they do not therefore lie in the ordinary track of Indiamen, or else Corporal Glass and his little colony would be as well known to readers of Indian travels as Mrs. Glass of cooking celebrity to all readers. Besides the largest island called after the discoverer, there are two others, Nightingale and Inaccessible Island, both much smaller, with high bleak shores and forbidding rocky beaches. These islands can only be approached by boats or small vessels in a perfect calm—the landing is dangerous even then. Had they both been called Inaccessible, the name would not have been much of a misnomer. A few swine and goats have been put by the colonists upon both of them, and now live luxuriously there, nothing to do but eat, drink, multiply, and replenish the earth, their great enemy, man, seldom seen, perhaps never, by many of them.

Tristan d'Acunha, the largest of the three, is of somewhat peculiar construction. A moun-

tain, upwards of eight thousand feet high, occupies its southern portion, whilst a wide plain slopes beautifully down to the sea upon the north—a wide plain, with three streams of no great size, but perennial, called the Napoleon, the Wellington, and the Glass Rivers. Such is fame! The mountain to the south is a rugged, precipitous mass of granite, with strange caves here and there, some of which Mr. Brody assured me, had never been thoroughly explored. Its base, and a portion of its side, are covered with lofty trees, some of which are said to form valuable timber. When the artillery lived in the island, several of these were felled, and lately the strength of the colony has been equal to transporting a few of them from the mountain's base to Glass Bay in the north, a distance of nine miles, principally by means of the Wellington, which, after heavy rain, is a perfect torrent.

A voyage in a vessel like the *Osprey* differs as much from a voyage in one of the large East Indiamen, or Oriental steamers, as a journey through England in a carrier's waggon, from the same journey accomplished in a first-class railway carriage. The small

number of hands ; the little attention paid to luxury, or what a landsman would be disposed to consider comfort or convenience rather ; the tumbling about of the little vessel, like a nut-shell in an agitated cistern, even when the said landsman could discern no cause for such tumbling at all, are by no means the least pleasant features of a voyage of fifteen hundred miles in a small brig. It was altogether dispiriting to the searcher after adventure, to find himself disgusted with what he knew to be inevitable, long before the weary fortnight's journey was at an end.

Yet there was much on the other hand that was interesting and novel in the expedition. The frank sailorly friendship of Brody displayed itself in unceasing attempts to render the passage pleasant and agreeable to his solitary passenger, whilst his Irish humour, softened into reflective feeling by his strange life, was a study not easily to be exhausted. His crew, too, all Islanders, were equally subjects for observation. They were so unlike the sailors of the great world, and of ordinary seaports, that I could scarcely fancy myself sometimes in a ship at all. Not that



they were peculiarly excellent, or remarkably intelligent, or fine specimens of mankind physically. Far from it. They required to be kept in order just like other sailors—they obeyed Brody from a fear of the consequences should they rebel—they spoke, sometimes with pleasure, sometimes with disgust, of their ocean home, just as the humour of the day suggested.

They were rude, hardy, weather-beaten young men, who had been reared there, whose families, fathers, mothers, wives, sons, and daughters, were almost all alive, and who, therefore, looked upon Tristan D'Acunha as their natural home, upon Brody as their natural "captain," upon Glass as their legitimate sovereign, and upon their island and Cape Town as all the world that they wished to explore. They could not help seeing that they were far better off than the majority of sailors whom they met, either coming in whaling-vessels or at the Cape, and, whilst they grumbled at their position, they clung to it.

"We've got widin sight o' the islands at last, anyways," said Brody, coming into my

cabin, early one morning, when the "lively" brig was dancing about a little less outrageously than usual.

I lost no time in getting on deck. There, on the horizon, right a-head, rose the lofty summit of the mountain, forming an irregular line, that resembled the edge of a thick black cloud, shining in the sun. On the right and left of it rose, just above the water, hardly visible, the more even surfaces of Nightingale and Inaccessible Island. Only two of the crew were watching these specks on the horizon, although four of those from the island were on deck. The other two lay listlessly about, waiting for "eight bells" to sound, which terminated their watch and relieved them.

As we sailed that evening into Glass Bay, the inhabitants, who were, doubtless, looking for their island schooner, were surprised at our approach. A boat, resembling the long-boat of a whaler, put off from the shore, with some casks of water, potatoes, cabbages, and the other vegetables which they usually supplied to the ships, in exchange for left-off clothing, and utensils of various kinds.

Brody's greeting, as they drew near, informed them of their mistake, and, as they recognised the voice, they saluted it with a wild "hurra!" a genuine English "hurra!" that sounded pleasantly from fellows that looked so foreign in their unshaven faces and various head-dresses.

As they clambered on board, I should have mistaken them for pirates, had not the recognition assured me that they were the true Islanders, some of the very men whom I had come to see. They were armed with pistols and cutlasses in their belts. Their hirsute faces, trimmed with the scissors only, made them look to my fancy, depraved by civilization, like savages. Their dress was of the most various and irregular description possible. One big fellow, that seized Brody's hand with the grasp of a vice, and whose grizzled beard and erect bearing told him to be what he was, an old soldier, looked particularly threatening in a rough fur cap, woollen sailor's shirt, and wide trousers, well patched, evidently made out of an old sail. Another had a small military undress cap upon his head; a third, a glazed sailor's wide-awake; whilst a fourth rejoiced

in an unshapely piece of sheepskin, which had been rudely converted into a head-covering.

Nor was the rest of their dress less various than were their caps and hats. One sported a pair of black cloth pantaloons, that had evidently belonged to the full-dress wardrobe of some careful landsman ; another had a pair of leather inexpressibles of the most nondescript character, and of most original design. It was evident that convenience and necessity, not fashion, had moulded their clothing. There was but one point similar in the attire of each—that was, in the extent of patching ; there could be no doubt that the Tristandacunian females were adepts with the needle. This extent and variety of patching, however, might partly have been accounted for by the state in which these clothes are usually obtained by the islanders. Ships' crews exchange these articles of clothing for water, potatoes, turnips, cabbages, and pigs—exchanging, of course, only that portion of their varied wardrobes which has already been condemned as useless, or nearly so.

My curiosity to see the island and its inha-

bitants was, in no small degree, increased, by the aspect of this boat's crew. If the men are clothed in so original a manner, thought I, how will the women be covered? Ships' crews have not usually much female attire to exchange for anything, however useful or necessary.

I was, of course, an object of interest to the islanders as much as they to me. When Brody had given them an account of how the schooner had been lost, and how I had interested myself in procuring for them the brig, exaggerating my little services a hundred-fold, oneafter another shook me warmly by the hand, and hoped that I would determine upon taking up my abode with them altogether. I was as cordial as they were, squeezing the rough horny hands that grasped mine as well as I could in a vain endeavour to emulate their warmth of feeling, but at the hint of stopping there altogether I shook my head.

"You want married men amongst you," said I, "not unprofitable bachelors, such as I am; and, besides, I dare say you have no newspaper for me to edit, and that's almost the only thing I can do."

Brody had my portmanteau put into the boat, and, leaving the brig to be brought to her anchorage by his father, the tall fellow in the rough fur cap, who was also an excellent seaman, he accompanied me on shore to introduce me to the great man of the place—the venerable Glass. As we pulled into the bay, I saw the huts of the islanders scattered about the mouth of a pleasant stream. An elevated semicircular mound behind, was occupied by a pleasant-looking house, built more after the European fashion than I had expected to find any in this out-of-the-way place.

“That is Mr. Glass’s house, I suppose,” said I to Brody, pointing to the European-looking residence I had noticed.

“No,” said he, “Misther Glass lives in a house here beyant; you can’t see it yet, jist round the bluff on our right—that one was for the officers of the artillery, when the soldiers was here; there was two of them, so there was; and it’s our church now.”

“Your church?” I exclaimed; “and who officiates there?”

“Mr. Glass, of coorse, who else?” rejoined Brody, surprised at the question.

“What an extraordinary man,” I half muttered to myself.

“It’s throe for ye, sir, an’ it’s an extraor-dinar’ man he is, all out; but shure that’s no throuble at all at all to him, for he has the larnin’, an’ he taught every mother’s son of us how to read, so he did, when we were spalpeens, only he niver could get the ould talk off my tongue, an’ my father an’ my mother talkin’ the same way kipt me in it.”

“Mr. Glass taught the children, too, then?” I observed.

“He did, sir, shure enough, it’s throe for ye, an’ a man that knew more it wouldn’t be aisy to find in these parts.”

As we drew near the landing-place, doubling the bluff which concealed the best part of the little colony, I observed two or three women and several children coming down to the beach, towards which we were approaching. One of them Brody recognized as his wife, who had evidently determined to discover at once if there was any information about the schooner or her husband forthcoming from the

brig. She and her companions were dressed as women of the lower orders in England would be dressed; there was nothing whatever remarkable about their appearance, save that the handkerchiefs tied round the head instead of a bonnet gave them a slightly foreign aspect. Each of them wore, too, under her outer cloak or shawl, an apron, like a child's pinafore, of sail-cloth, not unlike that worn by the factory-girls in Manchester and other manufacturing towns—but this I did not observe till afterwards.

The cottages were better, and their vicinity kept in neater order in this sheltered nook behind the bluff, than those which dotted the mound topped by the European-looking house. Their walls, as I afterwards found, were formed of shingle and loose stones, cemented by mud, and they were thatched with a long grass abundant in the interior of the island. Their glass windows were put in scientifically—the frames smoothly formed and accurately fitted. It was evident, at a glance, that some one in Tristan D'Acunha was acquainted with carpentering. Around the cottages, which were seven or eight in number, were pleasant



trees and bushes, principally apple trees and gooseberry bushes, which had been planted by the colonists, the seeds having been originally brought, like almost all that they had, from the Cape.

Affectionate greetings were interchanged between Brody and his wife on our landing—he was informed that a day or two after his departure his household was increased by the advent of a thriving boy, whilst he, on his side, had much to communicate respecting the loss of the schooner and the substitution of the brig. All this delayed us for some time upon the beach. Whatever idlers there were in the colony—principally children—were soon collected around us, many of them with no other covering than a loose coarse shirt, but all with the ruddy glow of health and the bronzed tint acquired by constant exposure. One urchin climbed up Brody's knees as he told his tale, another hung on by his jacket behind, whilst a third got between his legs. Many occupied themselves in leisurely surveying me, evidently regarding me as a curiosity imported for them to stare at.

The news of the loss of the schooner spread

from cottage to cottage, and as we advanced slowly towards the central house of the little village, anxious faces peered forth from the open doors, or interrogated the passers-by in broad Scotch, in Cape jargon, a kind of Dutch-English, in the Yorkshire dialect, or the rich brogue of Ireland, just as if they had only recently left their native shores. Even of those born in the island the majority appeared to retain the distinctive provincialisms of their parents, varied only a little by a few slang or Dutch terms imported from the Cape or from the whaling crews that occasionally touched at Tristan D'Acunha.

At length we reached the residence of the great man, the founder and president of this little commonwealth. We ushered ourselves in without ceremony—the cottage was empty, but the daughter of the illustrious chief, now the wife of one of his companions and the mother of a thriving brood, was in the garden behind it, looking after some poultry ; she speedily made her appearance.

“ My father’s jist gone to dig a few potatoes doon in the field beyond—rin, Sandy, rin,” said she to a little red-haired urchin

beside her; “rin an’ ca’ yer grandfayther here, my bairn.”

Sandy disappeared at once.

It was quite true. Cincinnatus-like, the king, chief-justice, priest, and schoolmaster of Tristan D’Acunha was digging potatoes in a field at some distance from the cottage! Mrs. Macrae, his daughter, introduced us into her humble abode, and gave us such chairs and seats as were available—rough and of substantial form, for the most part, but deficient decidedly in elegance.

“It’s an airy season, ye see, sir,” said she, addressing me, “an’ the potatoes must be got ready for the *Enterprize* betimes.”

The name of the schooner brought forth from Brody an account of its loss, the third I had heard that day. Some good oaten bread and cold bacon were soon produced, together with a flask of Hollands gin, and, as we were partaking of these luxuries, the patriarch of Tristan D’Acunha himself—the venerable Corporal Glass—made his appearance. We all rose to welcome him. Even the little urchins who loitered about the door and watched our performances on the oaten

bread and the bacon, grinned forth a welcome to him.

Glass was not at all what I had pictured to myself he would be. His appearance was venerable from his white hair and beard, neither of which was long, but, with this exception and that of his keen grey eyes, there was nothing to distinguish him in appearance from any ordinary English farmer of the lower ranks. He wore high boots that reached almost to his knees—a pair of leather breeches and a snuff-coloured coat, short, wide, and well-patched. His white shirt alone distinguished him from those around me, his white shirt and his blue cloth cap, which, monarch like, he retained on his head till he joined us at the table.

The loss of the schooner was again detailed, this time with tedious minuteness. It was bad enough to have been a witness of the catastrophe, but to have it rehearsed four times in one day until one's ears and mind were both tired and sick of it, was a trial of patience, that I felt irksome enough.

“A bad business enough,” said Glass, “Aweel, aweel, it canna’ be helpit. We maun jist mak the best o’ it. We’ll ha’e anither

cargo ready for you in a week, my lad, an' you maun just bring a few men wi' you fro' the Cape to tak' the brig back again, whin you come. We'll have anaither schooner ready by next year—there's plenty o' timber in Tristan D'Acunha."

It was evident how Glass had got on in the world—not by brooding over misfortune or sitting down to repine, but by gallantly facing the evils that could not be averted, and as gallantly overcoming them.

"An' noo, Brody," said the chief, "ye'll be wantin' to gang till yer family, my lad. Leave the brig to yer fayther, and the rest to me. As for the gentleman, Lizzy," he continued, addressing his daughter, "we must get the Lieutenant's room ready up at the church, an' much beholdin' to him we are for a' that he's done."

I was comfortably enough located in what was still called the Lieutenant's room—a small chamber adjoining the European-looking house on the mound, which had formerly been the bed-room of the commanding officer of the little garrison when Tristan D'Acunha was held by a military force. Everything

then used had, of course, been removed—it was stocked with furniture from the Corporal's store-room, or from the superfluities of the best houses in 'Tristan D'Acunha. A good mattress, not too soft ; two substantial chairs ; a small round table ; a stool with a metal basin on it for washing, and a diminutive looking-glass, constituted the luxurious furniture of this aristocratic chamber ; for *luxurious* furniture, and an *aristocratic* chamber, both were certainly considered to be by the worthy islanders.

## CHAPTER X.

## THE ISLAND OF THE LIVING CRUSOES.

AFTER the tossing about of the little brig upon the waves of the Atlantic, I slept deliciously in this strange apartment, lulled to sleep by the hoarse roar of the sea as it rolled upon and retreated from the pebbly beach.

In the morning, after completing my toilette, in the natural and simple manner rendered necessary by the unsophisticated habits of the Tristandacunians, I sallied forth to take a walk before breakfast. Pathways led between the different enclosures down into the interior of the island as far as the cultivation extended. It was altogether a beautiful scene that met my gaze as I left the house and stood upon the mound to take a survey of the island. In

the bay, sheltered by a projecting cliff, which rose almost perpendicularly from the deep water, lay the brig quietly at anchor, her own boat and one of those owned by the islanders both at her side, being laden with cargo to be conveyed on shore.

All around on land was perfectly still and composed, hardly a sound but the twitter of the birds singing in the early sunshine. South rose the dark mountain, capped with clouds, that occupied nearly half the island, ending the view in that quarter; the fields in the neighbourhood were rich with crops that were only awaiting the sickle—in some of them, indeed, the islanders were busily engaged in reaping wheat and oats, their staple produce, which seemed to ripen here, in sheltered situations, as early as potatoes. Extensive pasture lands lay beyond the corn-fields, in which the oxen and sheep browsed undisturbed. Here and there women made their way amongst the former, milking, occasionally tying up some unruly cow to a tree, or getting a sturdy urchin to assist them whilst the operation progressed.

The only men visible were those working at the brig, at this distance only faintly discern-



ible, and the few, half-a-dozen, perhaps, who were reaping. One loungee, apparently an idle ne'er-do-weel, I noticed afterwards, lolling on a bank, half-dozing, half awake, when he ought to have been engaged in some description of work. The idle children who were about, speedily made acquaintance with me ; the bashful timidity of children brought up in civilized society was altogether wanting amongst them, and when they had once broken the ice of restraint, which they were not long in doing, their attentions were far from agreeable. One insisted on examining my watch, whilst a second pulled out my handkerchief, and displayed it to the rest, laughingly.

I was in danger of being utterly despoiled, when Mrs. Macrae's kind interposition saved me from further annoyance.

"Gude mornin' to you, freend," said she, "I ken ye'll be havin' an appetite for your breakfast the mornin'."

"Indeed you are quite right," said I ; "I feel hungry enough. I wanted, however, to have a little walk before I took it, to see something of your fine island."

"Aweel, aweel, you'll dae jist as you like 't.

Wull ye tak yer breakfast wi' us or in yer own room? Mayster Glass 'll be always glad to see you, you ken, when you like."

"Thank you," I replied; "I'll take my breakfast in my own room this morning, if you please."

"Vera weel, and gude mornin'. My dochter will see till 't presently, but I've muckle to dae, I ken, an' I must not be standin' gossip-pin' here. Awa' wi' you, Jock; awa' wi' you, Barney, an' let the gentleman gang his gait in quietness."

Jock and Barney slunk away at the command, unhesitatingly. It was evident that Mr. Glass's family inherited his natural capability for governing, for Mrs. Macrae was a formidable woman in the colony. The idle loon who had been lounging on the sunny bank before, on hearing her voice, was labouring strenuously in a little garden adjoining, before her departure.

My appearance still excited considerable interest in the huts and cottages I passed—many of which, though differing much in external appearance, according to the industrious or idle habits of their inmates, were comfortable

within. The women and children gazed on me as I passed through the fields or over the narrow pathways that led from the cottages towards the mountain, gazed upon me with interest, as Londoners would gaze upon a North American Indian in his national costume parading the streets of their metropolis.

But though rude in manners and unpolished, there was a healthy, hopeful air about everything in 'Tristan D'Acunha, that spoke eloquently in favour of the system of government which prevailed there. Prosperity made them contented for the most part. On the return of the schooner, Brody had informed me, drunkenness was the besetting sin of the colonists ; for every family had its own supply of gin, which was imported of excellent quality from the Cape. It was Glass's policy, however, to prevent the distribution of the cargo until the vessel was laden again, a service which occupied the majority of the able men ; and although there was much grumbling at this arrangement, there had never been any open revolt.

All the cargo, duly labelled, was stowed, as it arrived, in an empty cottage adjoining

Glass's residence, and one of the crew was obliged to mount guard in the neighbourhood, till the distribution took place, in order to give timely notice of any attempt at robbery. Such was the good sense of the majority, however, that attempts of this kind were rare ; irregularities were severely punished in the most summary way, and, as the delinquents were shunned by the great mass of their friends when in fault, there was little temptation to outrage. The pressure of a full population, much less of any surplus, had not yet been felt, could not be felt for years—when it does, and Glass has been summoned to his fathers, who can tell what anxiety and outrage, violence and crime, may not prevail in the island? But that is a distant contingency, to which none of the colonists as yet look forward.

My breakfast was of the same homely, yet comfortable character, that pervaded all the arrangements of my abode. I waited, of course, upon myself, for such a thing as a servant was unknown in Tristan D'Acunha ; and although Mrs. Macrae's daughter, a girl of thirteen or fourteen years of age, with the blue eyes and flaxen hair of the Highlands, and the tanned

skin of the colony, would not disdain to bring me all that was requisite for breakfast—for it was woman's province in Tristan D'Acunha, as elsewhere, to look after the domestic arrangements of the table—yet she would have been highly offended at being required to do more than convey the necessary viands and utensils to their destination, and remove them when the meal was concluded.

I felt doubtful, indeed, as to whether I should not be expected to wash up the cup and saucer, the knives and plates I had used; and, lest I should give offence, when my young butler returned to remove them, I exclaimed,

“Wait a little, I haven't washed up the things yet.”

“No, no, man,” was her reply, for her Scotch was by no means so broad as that of her worthy parents; “no, no, man; I've no want you to do that. Leave that to the lasses.”

Having so said, and having wrapped her head up again in a handkerchief, she placed the breakfast things on a board, that answered the purpose of a tray, and tripped off lightly with them to her grandfather's, which was at

some distance ; her bare arms—already covered with a fine coating of hair—displayed the muscles that she had inherited from her robust parents to advantage.

I was engaged in smoking a contemplative cheroot after breakfast, wondering whether King Glass would do me the honour of visiting me or not, when I saw him advancing towards the house ; it was not, however, with the intention of calling upon me that he came there, but to open the school-house—the large room of the building, which answered the purpose of the school-house, church, town-hall, and concert-room, for Brody had informed me that a few of the islanders had musical instruments, and gave concerts in the autumnal evenings.

Several young urchins, with the shaggiest possible heads, were playing about on the mound, not far from the door of my room, which always stood open, according to the habits of the colony. I thought these youthful gazers had been attracted there solely by my presence, and that they came to amuse themselves with a long leisurely stare, which they enjoyed, whilst I enjoyed my cheroot ; but when the door of the large apartment

had been opened, they rushed in tumultuously, a bell sounded, and other children, boys and girls, came bounding up the mound from all directions.

I left my cheroot forthwith on my port-manteau, and went into the school-room. Nothing could be more impressive than the aspect of the room as I approached it. The venerable chief stood, cap in hand, reverentially repeating the Lord's Prayer, whilst the little crowd of children, twenty to thirty in number, knelt here and there upon the floor, repeating it after him. A young man, whom I recognised as the loungee of the morning, was also present. Glass had installed him as his successor, not in the government of the island, but in that of the school; and, although his learning was by no means extensive, yet the young man was well qualified for the post, inasmuch as he spoke English better than most of the others in the island, and was fond of reading. It was apparent, however, that his increase of knowledge had by no means taught him content.

The Bible was the only book Glass read himself. He was not at all literary in his tastes, but his grandson had a history of the

French revolution, procured at the Cape, and Glass would occasionally listen to the account of the battle of Waterloo, in which his father, an artilleryman like himself, had lost his life. Napoleon, Wellington, and Glass, were the three heroes known to 'Tristan D'Acunha—they had heard of none others, and they were content with those three. Napoleon's captivity had caused the occupation of 'Tristan D'Acunha. Wellington and Waterloo had caused Napoleon's captivity, and Glass was the result! Such was their political creed, and they asked about nothing else.

Illiterate as he was, however, Glass made up for his want of cultivation, by the strong current of good sense and piety combined, which formed the most prominent characteristics of his disposition. He trusted in God and in his own strength, not without feeling a little proud of the position he held and the respect he commanded in his colony. He knew that he had been the suggester and the artificer of the scheme, and, as he looked around upon the smiling fields and comfortable cottages which occupied the northern plains of the island, he, doubtless, felt that he had



much to be proud of, and that it was not every day that the world witnessed so complete a triumph, in a good and beneficial cause.

He was by no means a communicative man, rather, indeed, the reverse—reserved and of few words. His deeds spoke for him. Every cottage in Tristan D'Acunha, every field, every planted bush, every fence and hedge, spoke eloquently of what he had done—why should he, too, speak? He left it to these to proclaim what he was; he contented himself with managing wisely, and talking little. The rough, unrefined, illiterate good sense which he himself possessed, he had impressed upon the colony. All strove to imitate the hero of the island—after jealousies and quarrels had ended, and he had been unmistakably acknowledged as the hero—all wished to be like him, naturally enough, and he was plain and unaffected, a man of one book, of much doing, and of little talking.

In subsequently conversing with Brody and his father, I found that the respectable inhabitants were quite contented with their lot, looking upon it as being far from a miserable

one. There were others, however, who grumbled, as Englishmen always will; who regretted that they had ever set foot or been born in 'Tristan D'Acunha, and declared themselves and all around them wretched; but they were the idle or vicious, for the most part—those who did not labour with hearty good will, and, therefore, found their time hang heavily on their hands. Between the elder Brody and Glass there seemed to subsist a warm friendship. Each had the most entire confidence in the other—they were the only two remaining of the first male colonists. Of the women who had originally settled in the island, three survived.

Sunday was observed as a day of rest at 'Tristan D'Acunha — of rest, of meditation, and of innocent recreation. At noon the little congregation assembled, of thirty or forty persons. Glass read a chapter to them from the Old Testament. They then sang a hymn—one of the collection of Scotch psalms attached to the Scotch bibles. Another chapter was read from the New Testament, and a short commentary upon it by the young school-master. A prayer was then offered up by the patriarch of the colony—a simple, earnest

prayer, in which all the little wants and difficulties of Tristan D'Acunha were detailed, and the blessing of the Almighty invoked upon their labours. Lastly, a hymn was sung, a blessing was pronounced, and the congregation departed. Such religion does the heart good to contemplate. It is altogether different from religion in purple and fine linen—in fashionable assemblies of finely-dressed people, gazing and worshipping—altogether different from too much that one sees everywhere under the name of religion.

The rest of the day was spent by these, the more respectable part of the population, in walking about the fields—every one scrupulously neat and clean, even the children, rough sons and daughters of nature, had some little piece of finery on, to remind them that it was Sunday. Of the others, however, not a few were drunk.

I was not a witness of any burial in the colony, but the little mounds, with a board at the head of each, on which was painted the name and history of the deceased, showed that in their burials, as in every thing else, a decent simplicity reigned, pleasant to contemplate.

In such a place, however, an idler has no business ; and, although I fully employed myself in excursions to the mountain, and in geological researches, yet I was not sorry when the Osprey was under way again. I bade farewell heartily to my honest, simple friends, leaving some little memorial with each ; and, on the eighth day after I had landed, was sailing out of Glass Bay again, on my way to the Cape. On arriving there, I found Kabob had already made preparations for returning to Calcutta, and I speedily followed his example.

## CHAPTER XI.

## A GHOST STORY.

A GUN is fired upon the ramparts of Fort William, in Calcutta, every morning, to announce to the drowsy Anglo-Indians of the neighbourhood the first faint dawn of day. Those who are anxious to preserve their health in so uncongenial a climate, take warning by the gun, and, leaping from their couches, prepare for the usual morning walk or ride, before the increasing heat renders all exercise in the open air unpleasant or dangerous. The European quarter of the town—its “West End,” in fact—called Chouringhee, is in the immediate neighbourhood of the Fort, so that the report of the early gun may be heard by most of the Anglo-Indians, if they wish.

Round the Fort stretches, as I have before mentioned, an extensive plain as level as a bowling-green, called the *maidaun*, a plain covered with brilliant green vegetation after the rains, but parched, brown, and sear, during the heats of April, May, and June. The *maidaun* is the usual scene of the pedestrian or equestrian exploits of the good people of Calcutta, first in the early morning, and again at the close of the day, when a delicious hour of coolness after the sun has set is snatched from the night. On three sides only, however, does this plain surround the Fort ; on the fourth, the Hooghly, with its turbid, muddy waters, foul with human corpses, rushes along, a long narrow road alone separating the two.

Of all sacred rivers, the Hooghly is the mud-diast and foulest. Hoarse-grumbling along on its earthen bed, it rushes on, ever bearing down to the ocean its horrid freight of dead men, women, and children chasing each other along in a race of death—their bleached bodies gleaming in the sunlight, ghost-like, out of the yellow murky fluid which surrounds them, and here and there, too, still more horrid to contemplate, dotted with crows tearing out their entrails, or

quietly pluming themselves after their disgusting repast. Ever past the green glacis and picturesque ramparts of Fort William, glides the river sullenly along, the mouths of cannon looking down upon it like the eyes of monsters emerged from its own horrid depths.

Many such iron mouths does the Hooghly see on its course to the Indian ocean, as it hurries past the oriental spires of Moorshedabad, the Muhammadan minarets of Cossimbazar, the Hindu temples of Kutwa, or the Christian churches of Calcutta, for in close proximity to each of these are the death-dealing weapons of modern warfare, frowning grimly upon it, and telling of far other passions than the aspirations and fervour of religious devotion should give birth to.

Past the *dinghy*, or ferry-boat of the Hindu river-man, and the gig of the English merchant ship, and the junk of China, and the coir-bound uncouth bark of the Malays, the Hooghly glides by them all on its course, reflecting each as perfectly as its muddy nature will admit, and dashing its burden of human corpses indifferently against one or the other, as it hurries on with speed to the ocean. An

impetuous, persevering monster this Hooghly, that tells the lazy Asiatic, with his luxurious do-nothingness, how work should be accomplished, how success can alone be achieved in these days—a lesson the lazy Asiatic, with his luxurious do-nothingness, will *not* learn, leaves rather for his European fellow-man to learn, and refuses utterly to study for himself—Fort William and the East India Company, English Governors-General and red-tape Members of Council the notable result.

The morning gun has fired, and we must be up and away, to breathe the fresh air whilst yet we may—whilst yet the sun remains hidden behind the salt lake and its vegetation, that lies to the east of the town. I want a companion for my morning's walk, and I insist on carrying off the reader with me—to a church-yard. Believe me, kind reader, we shall see much that is note-worthy at this early hour, as we cross the *maidaun* and make our way towards the road that skirts the river and separates it from the Fort. True, all is at present gloom, and the heavy mantle of night has not yet been fully lifted from the plain itself, or from the surrounding objects, but it will grow clearer, and



the forms of objects will be more distinct, as we advance.

Before we reach Government House, the soft grey twilight of early dawn will reveal its noble proportions to us as we pass it on our right. Here, along this well-kept path, on which the drowsy native policeman is yawning himself awake, lies our road ; he sees us, this gloomy-looking guardian of the peace, his dark face almost indistinguishable from his blue cotton suit, and the black helmet that reminds one of a japanned box. He recognizes the white dress of the *sahibs*, and is alert, vigorously asking the poor palanquin bearer that comes from his matutinal bath who *he* is !

Government House, the Governor-General's palace, is on our right—a right royal structure—not massive or sublime in its proportions, but large, well-designed, and rich-looking—suited to the climate, too, an important consideration. The Town Hall is also on our right as we make our way to the river, a building devoted to the spouting of enthusiastic orators, European and Asiatic, and to the balls of the fashionable world during the few months in which dancing is endurable in Calcutta.

The noise made by the political assemblies, and that caused by the exercise of "the light fantastic toe," and its accompaniments, are equally lasting and efficacious.

The Supreme Court and its offices of justice—where the blind goddess has long reigned supreme—are on our right too, as we draw near the shore. The history of this Supreme Court remains to be written; or rather of the Supreme Court, Union Bank and Co.—they were intimately united; for was not the Master in Equity of the one a Director of the other, when the shareholders lost their capital, and the constituents of the Bank their deposits, by its failure? Did not Sir Timothy Turtle and Mr. Grasp rule equally in the one establishment and in the other? Justice, however, is proverbially blind, and how could the Chief Justice, Sir Bland Trimmer, be expected to see through stone walls? How, indeed?\*

\* "What must be the state of society in India, when we find the majority of the officers of the highest judicial tribunal in the country lending themselves to the most glaring improprieties, and in not a few cases, to the most scandalous and heartless transactions? First in the list of these official defaulters is the late Registrar and official administrator of the court, who, after having been

But we have better things to engage our attention than tales of corruption and abuses, such as those that the Union Bank suggests. Let us forget such, and press on to the Hooghly. Seen imperfectly through this hazy dawn, the tall masts of English merchantmen, that a few months ago towered above the East India Docks on the Thames, may be distinguished, and vessels, too, from a still farther land than England—vessels as noble, as grand, as stately in their swan-like grace,

involved in a variety of joint-stock gambling, wound up by resigning his office, leaving his accounts many months in arrears, and his cash-balance deficient to the extent of seventy thousand pounds. Next comes the Official Assignee and Receiver of the Court, who closely followed in the financial steps of his brother officer; he, too, resigned, leaving a deficiency of fifty thousand pounds, and a corresponding arrears of accounts; *this man is still retained in active employment by the Court.* The Taxing Officer of this tribunal took the benefit of the Insolvent Court in 1847; whilst the Master in Equity, and the Prothonotary of the Court, were both constantly occupied in bank matters and speculations to a great extent, and with ruinous results, in bank shares." *Capper's Three Presidencies of India*, p. 473. I am sorry to be obliged to bear my humble testimony to the truthfulness of Mr. Capper's picture of what Anglo-Indian society was.

riding triumphantly on the turbid river, their stars and stripes telling of the far west with its aspirations and its onward progress—a country living, not like Europe and Asia, on the fame of the past, but in the glory of the future—yes, *in the future*, for go where you will in the States, are you not told of what *will be*, not of what *is*?

And, besides these,—the symbols of two of the great branches of the Anglo Saxon race (to which a third and younger brother will soon be added from the far East and South),—may be seen battling with the Hooghly, to hold its place on the waters also, the unwieldy junk of the Celestials, with its two painted eyes staring fixedly, but unintelligibly, from its bows into the gloom ahead, and vacantly asking whither the present is driving *its* country, and getting no response from any quarter, no intelligence from gazing never so fixedly ahead. There is no light to be gained from such staring now-a-days; no light for an old nation, time-hallowed and venerable, shaking off almost effete ways and institutions to try novelties and new ways; no telling what such may result in, any more than if the

huge leviathan of the ocean, that has long been safely moored to the shore, should be suddenly cast adrift again, and sent forth to do battle with the winds and waves and rocks, long ago fought with and vanquished—no telling decisively, truly, under such circumstances, but a suspicion of much evil unquestionably.

The Malay prahu may be seen here too, side by side with the American and the European, the Arab and the Chinese. Active Malay sailors are just beginning at this early hour to rouse themselves to the day's toils and struggles. The Malay is, in fact, the most active of Asiatics. He has all the excellences and all the defects of the Italian. A keen sense of the beautiful, and a worship of it — a quick sense of right and wrong,—a ready hand to revenge the latter with his well-kept *kreese* (his stiletto),—a no less quick and impulsive gratitude urging him to cast himself at the feet of a benefactor and adore him—with the depravities of the Italian too, the more debasing depravities, leading to utter destruction of body and soul. He is a worshipper of beauty, and ever-bountiful nature has surrounded him with

beautiful forms—nowhere is vegetation more rich and luxuriant, nowhere is woman more delicately moulded, more finely formed, than in Malacca and the Eastern Archipelago.

An Arab vessel is not far off from the Malay, but there are no dusky figures gliding about upon it yet, for your true Arab is a veritable epicurean—stately withal in his devotion to enjoyment, giving a dignity to sensuality, by the thoughtful, preoccupied way in which he indulges in it—religion, woman, and his pipe, the three objects of his devotion, he begins the day with the first, and spends it with the last—they are all three too compatible in his mind, no harsh grating of the conscience disturbing his enjoyment; Muhammad his example and Muhammad loved like him.

As we draw near the river, groups of talking Hindus and Muhammadans are emerging from it, having finished their ablutions—the women wringing out their long hair, and talking rapidly as they proceed—the men wringing out their wet clothes, and talking rapidly also—all talking, men, women and children—all always talking, as they walk along—no listeners, so far as I can discover.

The road which separates the river and the fort is a picturesque one, at this early hour. A few native soldiers are lounging about the banks or drying their clothes—an occasional European, in ghost-like white, paces stoutly along it, proud of his country and of himself, or gallops past on a fine Arab perhaps, proud of his country, of himself, and of his steed.

The determined seekers after what little health an Indian climate will allow to the exiled Englishman, may be seen regularly pacing, in monotonous lines, up and down the strand at this early hour. Some hold their European hat, the distinguishing symbol of their race, in their hands, that the faint morning breeze may play about their temples; others stalk past them shocked at such impropriety, who would suffer a thousand deaths rather than do anything strange or singular,—in complete costume—every portion of their attire unsuited to the climate. The air and the temperature of the city, the circumstances and condition of the citizens, demand loose robes for covering, but tyrant custom declares that the tight fitting vestures of more northern climes, and the unsuitable head-covering used under a

very different sky, must be maintained—and so they *are* maintained.

The natives emerging from their bath in the muddy waters of their sacred river, the perambulating Europeans, the equestrians few and far between, and the occasional loungee in a carriage, yawning past, all combine to form a strangely varied scene, with lights and shadows, frames and fittings, background and foreground peculiar to itself. Out of Calcutta, there is probably no such picture to be seen in living reality as that presented by the banks of the Hooghly at this early dawn.

Let us extend our walk, however. Advancing towards the native part of the city, in a northerly direction, the vessels become thicker, the forests of masts more impenetrable, on our left, whilst on our right we see the bank of Bengal and some imposing-looking warehouses, that tell the stranger the busy commerce of the West has found its way to these distant shores and become a denizen of the soil. Turning up a street to our right, in which only a few servants are yet to be seen at their masters' gates, throwing earthen pots of water over their bodies,—an occasional



door open here, and the venetianed blinds of a window opening there, we arrive at length at a burial-ground. There is a large old mouldering wooden tomb in its very centre. There is, as you say, little to admire in the tomb—its worm-eaten aspect and antiquated form tell of other days. Age comes swiftly on, amid the tropical life and growth of Calcutta, its heat and its humidity, and a tomb of fifty years ago looks as aged and venerable as one of centuries old in England.

There is a strange tradition connected with that old worm-eaten tomb. A large building in an adjoining square was erected by government as a residence for their young civilians on arriving in Calcutta. These young civilians are still called *writers*, and the long line of European-like houses was hence called Writers' Buildings, a name which it still retains. It has long ceased, however, to be a residence for the young rulers and judges and revenue collectors of Bengal, and consists now of store-houses and merchants' offices for the most part—the College of Fort William, as it is called, or the place where the neophytes are

examined every six months in the vernacular languages, still occupying the centre.

When these Writers' Buildings were inhabited by a number of young men hardly out of their teens, who were being manufactured into magistrates, revenue-collectors, judges and secretaries, in the most economical way and on the shortest notice, there was a party of them collected together one dark night, carousing and amusing themselves with ghost stories. The neighbouring church-yard, that before which we stand, was mentioned as being haunted. A youthful despiser of the marvellous—nervous and headstrong—laughed at the superstitious tale.

"I'll bet you a hundred rupees," said one of his companions, in an overbearing way, "that you won't go and drive a large nail into the old wooden tomb in the middle of that church-yard this dark night."

"Done!" said the nervous aspirant—although not without a shudder at the idea.

It was a dark, dismal night. The wind howled in long melancholy gusts, like the wailings of departed spirits, through the long passages and among the intricate door-ways

of Writers' Buildings. The rain, a fine, sand-like rain, was driven in masses by the wind, fitfully—rushing across the square, and into every casement, and against every door-way in the wildest way, as if seeking a refuge from the irregular blasts that lashed it along.

The young civilian wrapped himself up in a voluminous boat-cloak before facing the storm, and, nail and hammer in hand, issued into the square. The door closed behind him. The oil lamps—for the City of Palaces does not even yet boast gas—the oil lamps had been all extinguished. The night was dark, and not a living thing was to be met with in the streets.

Getting more and more nervous, more and more excited, as he advanced, the young man made his way along. He groped through the church-yard; the tombs dancing before him—as the wind swept over them, and the rain flickered in sheets—dancing before him, in a wild, warning maze. It was no joke to walk through the dark church-yard that gusty night, or to reach the wooden tomb in the midst, with the rain gushing like a cataract against his face, and the wind blowing the large boat-cloak about in a voluminous entangling way.

At length, his faculties wound up to a great effort, excitement wild within him, the young civilian gained the wooden tomb. He felt about for a convenient place to drive in the nail. It was a large nail, and the wood was soft. The hammer was raised, and the iron was easily driven into the half-rotten timber. His task was accomplished—but the tombs had been dancing before his eyes in an unearthly reel all the time, and he doubtless fancied a thousand spirits were shrieking at his unhallowed task, as the wind groaned amongst the tombstones, and whistled round the church-porch, and grated through the wire-protected windows. Twelve o'clock was booming forth from the tower.

His task was accomplished. He had driven in the large nail nearly to the head. With the hammer still in his hand, he turned to leave the gloomy burial-ground—turned quickly—was seized by the neck—was checked suddenly from behind—and fell, in a fit or faint, insensible to the ground.

Within the Writers' Buildings the revelry continued.

“The wager will be won,” said one; “he

will return forthwith—a hundred rupees easily earned.”

“I would not do it for a thousand,” said another.

“That was he, as he shut the door behind him, that leads into the corridor,” suggested the first.

No, it was but the wind.

“A glass to the ghost of the wooden tomb!” and, in heedless mirth, a bumper was quaffed all round, with much laughter.

“He delays long,” is whispered round the table, as one after another peeps at his watch, and discovers that it is past twelve—he had been half-an-hour gone, and more. They drank, laughed, told tales again; half-an-hour more glided by. He had been more than an hour away! and the wind still blew and the rain still fell, sheet-like, as before. Faces that had been joyous grew more and more grave; flushed cheeks became pale; the mirth had given place to anxiety and alarm.

A few minutes more, and they issued forth in a body, with servants and lights, to see what had become of their friend.

They entered the church-yard. They ad-

vanced near to the wooden tomb, and there, upon the frowzy grass, lay their late boon companion, half shrouded in his boat-cloak,—insensible.

They examined his cloak. It was nailed to the tomb. In his hurry and agitation, he had driven the nail through the fold of his cloak, as he struck it home with hard, quick blows into the timber. He had turned, alarmed, agitated, excited, to depart—the cloak had grasped him by the neck, and, overpowered with sudden emotion, he had fallen sideways upon the ground

When his companions lifted him from the ground, they found that they bore a corpse in their arms. He had fallen in a fit, from which he never recovered. Excitement and terror had killed him.

## CHAPTER XL.

## PER PORRINGER TO ADEN.

It is with pleasure that the exile of a few years turns his back upon the scene of his banishment, and commences the journey that is to lead him to the land of his birth and of early associations. Beautiful as may be the country ; magnificent the buildings ; picturesque the views, he leaves them all behind, without regret and without a sigh. Even the discomforts of a steamer, and the incessant tremor in which the luckless voyager is kept by the vibration of the machinery, are disregarded and made light of. The eye is fixed on a far distant shore, which presents attractions far superior to any other—attractions that the mind feeds upon during the long voyage without fear of satiety.

The Overland Journey from India to England—if one may be allowed to apply that term, as it is usually applied, to a journey of some thousands of miles by sea, and scarcely a hundred by land—is one of considerable variety and interest. It has been described over and over again, and it is not my intention to write much of what has been so fully discussed already. One part of the route, however, and that I think the most interesting—the Red Sea—has been generally dismissed with a few words only, whilst whole chapters have been written about Alexandria and Malta, Gibraltar and Point de Galle.

No one can help being struck with the aspect of Aden, who visits it for the first time. The traveller is approaching Arabia, that land of extraordinary associations and extraordinary history—a history of fitful activity, alternating with long periods of repose : the Red Sea is on his left, as the steamer labours along, and the inhospitable coasts of Africa and Arabia are in his immediate vicinity.

Situated on an iron-bound coast, with bleak rocks and gigantic volcanic cones in its



immediate vicinity—volcanic cones once terribly active, doubtless, but now mute and at rest—the harbour of Aden has, to the eye of the wanderer over the ocean, all the attraction of the oasis in the desert to the weary traveller.

Few coasts, indeed, can compare with those of Arabia in bleak sternness and repulsive ruggedness. From the very jaws of the straits of Ormuz, leading into the Persian Gulf—the “Green Sea” of Asiatic geographers—to the Gate of Tears, as the poetic Orientals have styled the entrance into the Red Sea, a name which we use, losing its beauty, in the Bab-el-mandeb; throughout that vast extent of coast, there is an almost unbroken succession of rugged rocks and precipitous mountains, dashing headlong into the ocean, with shapeless accumulations of granite and lava scattered about in every direction, on the very water’s brink. Nor is the prospect much improved to the traveller by pursuing his journey up the Red Sea.

The Gate of Tears, with all its dangers, seen and unseen, safely passed—its rapid currents which sweep the becalmed merchant vessel

noiselessly to destruction, and ultimately cast it in malicious sportfulness upon the jagged rocks, which seem made to pierce a ship's bottom: its gusts of wind, which blow furiously and suddenly from either side, and lash the sea to fury and to foam, as it finds itself helplessly dashed against one sharp-pointed rock after another: its ugly rocks themselves, some peering aloft to heaven, stretching their long necks out of the ocean, as if to take a survey of the troubled sea around, whilst others hide themselves beneath the summit of the wave, lurking, as it were in ambush, for the unwary ship.—

These dangers passed—and man's ingenuity has sufficed to baffle and outwit them all—the iron-bound coast of Arabia stretches in a long line far away to the north and west, still rugged, still forbidding, still dangerous-looking and repulsive. Red and white mountains of rock—bare, unvariegated, monstrous rock—still exhibit themselves upon the water's edge, some playing calmly with the vexed waves, as they lash themselves into spray all around, others retired a little from the coast, and, looking down in ugly grandeur upon the

scene of commotion near their base. Such are the characteristics of the coast of Arabia.

It is not to be wondered at, then, that the voyager—as he sweeps round the bases of the rocky bluffs that long hid the harbours of Aden from his eye, and sees within the comparatively still water, and the few English colliers and Arab ships that trade to the port—feels a relief as if a load were taken off his mind, and, unoppressed by the weight of the gigantic debris of a former world, he could breathe freely once more. Not that the reader is to fancy a smiling village, and green fields, and pleasant country seats, dotting the margin of the landscape, as a companion picture to the few masts and hulls, and the peaceful harbour of which I have spoken.

By no means. As our noble vessel, one of the Peninsular and Oriental Company's Steamers, the *Porringer*, swept gracefully round the projecting bluffs, and gradually opened up the harbour within to our anxious gaze, we looked in vain for the pretty village which we had associated with the name of Aden.

“Aden, in Arabia,” says the imagination, “on the very coast—with a fine harbour well-

enclosed by lofty mountains—what a delicious scene it must be ! The minarets of the distant mosque, sparkling in the sunshine, and the white flat roofs of the houses, with the orange trees and palms just peeping above them from the luxurious gardens of the Orientals ; the coffee bushes on the distant hills so gracefully relieving the grander features of the primeval forests, and speaking of cultivation and peaceful happiness.”

Peace, imagination, peace—a truce to your reverie—nor coffee-bushes, nor primeval forests, nor luxurious gardens, nor palm-trees nor orange, nor flat roofs, nor distant mosques, are here—the scene is totally different, as different from such a one as you have pictured as a scene can well be. I am still on the deck of the *Porringer*, surveying the landscape with what enthusiasm I can muster for the occasion. Right in front of us are three Newcastle colliers, lately arrived, to feed the insatiate steamers—dirty, and black, and repulsive, as colliers do look, and, perhaps, ought to look, everywhere. Eleven thousand miles of ocean which they have traversed have not sufficed to wash them clean. By the side of them are a few Arab

vessels, looking as if made of shreds and patches from all others, without much distinctive character or anything particular to make them interesting—rather, indeed, the reverse, for their sailors are the most repulsive of living men.

Ladies or gentlemen who travel in Egypt or Arabia must not be over-nice—if they wish to see the lands of the sun, they must take them as they find them—to us, however, it does seem a refinement of indecency for those brawny black wretches — black almost as negroes—to wear a woollen jacket that covers their shoulders, and buttons over their hairy breasts, partially concealing them, whilst they leave all the rest of their ugly persons naked in their massive, muscular development. And in this costume, *proh pudor!* they will crowd to the sides of their vessels, or by the banks of the canals in Egypt, to watch modest Europeans going on their way rejoicing.

I have seen such a monster actually offer to assist an English lady into a boat to take her ashore, and, instead of turning and flying into the sea, the lady had the good sense smilingly to accept the proffered assistance, and graciously to reward it! When one hears

of an Australian native—half-monkey, half-man—getting a soldier's coat, and, with a stick over his shoulder to represent a musket, marching soldier-like through the streets of Sydney or Melbourne,—innocent the while of any other particle of clothing,—one does not feel so much astonished at it. Sydney and Melbourne lie east of refinement, but in Arabia and Egypt, and the Holy Land, one looks for better things, and does not expect to be shocked so outrageously.

By the side of these few Arab vessels, lying rather behind them, is moored the Bombay steamer, the *Agility*,—a steamer proverbially slow, even for Bombay,—which, by dint of leaving that port the day after the *Porringer* left Calcutta, has contrived to arrive at Aden in time with her passengers and mails, which we are now to take on to Suez. A few boats pass backwards and forwards in the harbour, rowed for the most part by those brawny Arabs in their easy *négligé*. These boats are of various sizes and shapes; and when they have been added to the colliers, the native coasting vessels, the *Agility* and the *Porringer*,

the entire contents of the harbour have been enumerated.

But the shore? Well, we are coming to that. Before us rise huge masses of rock, principally of a brick-red colour, as though an Australian brick-fielder had just swept over them, covering them with the reddest possible dust. Here and there a whiter portion of the rock may be faintly discerned—not that the contrast is striking, but on looking attentively one *does* perceive that the entire masses of rugged rock-mountains, with their jagged pinnacles, are not quite uniform in colour. In other places, indeed, it is slightly darker, not by any means approaching to black, but a decidedly dark red, like brick for some time exposed to the weather.

At the base of these forbidding mountains, red dust, like sand, is strewn, sinking into the waves in shingle and rock. Rocks and sand are before us, sand and rocks are behind. On our right hand rocks and sand alone are visible as far as the eye can reach, and sand and rocks on the left. Fantastic in form, varying in outline, with even some varieties of colour, too, amongst them, but still the same—rocks

and sand every where, sand and rocks on all sides. One irregular flat-roofed building alone breaks the monotony of the shingly, sand-covered beach—it is on our right hand, and is a kind of hotel and store, where, at enormous prices, various articles, eatable and other, may be procured.

But the town, the village, the port—Aden? Surely the one house on the sandy beach, shingle-covered, with rocks and sand all round it, does not constitute the town? exclaims some energetic and impatient reader. Certainly not. Hidden behind a rocky promontory, with an ugly shed peeping out towards the beach, is the Custom House, or the building which answers the purpose of such, and a few Arab huts are to be found, I believe, in its immediate neighbourhood. But even these do not constitute the village of Aden. Far away, in the crater of an extinct volcano,—three miles away at least,—the village lies, snugly imbedded in a huge amphitheatre of stone, and scarcely have our Arab friends, in their untrammelling costume, landed us upon the beach, than we desire to visit it, and are determined, indeed, to make the attempt. Till to-morrow morning



the *Porringer* will have the black stream, which feeds her fires, pouring into her—till daylight she cannot leave the harbour, so that we have plenty of time.

But how are we to get there? How to make our way from the hotel to the village imbedded in the rocks, three miles away? Walk, suggests the unsophisticated reader; nay, good reader, walking in Arabia, in the south of Arabia, within almost hailing distance of the hottest part of Africa, will not do. A walk of three miles from Charing Cross to Bayswater, or through May Fair, is practicable enough, in winter or summer, but a walk of three miles in the south of Arabia at midday is a totally different thing. Besides, even were it safe or practicable, who would think of walking in Arabia? is it not the land of camels and dromedaries, of horses and mules, of he-asses and she-asses?

All around the hotel, their feet sinking deeply in the sand and shingle on the beach, are animals prepared for the road. Horses, and mules, and donkeys with strange-looking saddles on their backs, and stranger bipeds at their heads, are looking mournfully at us, as though well aware that their mission for this

day, at all events, is to scamper over the well-known road, if road that can be called which is *no* road, to Aden, each with one of us on his back. There are side-saddles, too, for the ladies—yes, decent, Christian-looking side-saddles, evidently not Arab—for Arab ladies do not require such—they wear the bloomers, and ride accordingly.

A more awkward collection of quadrupedal animals than that which is drawn up on the beach before us, it would not be easy to discover elsewhere. The length of the ears of the horses astonishes the new-comer; their bony frames, too; one might almost be inclined to suppose that rocks and not bones distended their knee-joints, and produced the angularities of their outer surface. “Good horse, saar!” says the conductor of the steed, and, to show off his paces, jumps on his back and scampers madly over the shingle and the sand, and between huge masses of rocks, in an eminently reckless manner. He has come back, however, safe and sound, and whilst the ill-used animal mildly blows himself into wind again, his dismounted rider repeats his eternal “good horse, saar!—go to Aden, saar!” which words,

indeed, compose his entire available stock of English.

“One is a long distance from the ground on such an animal as that,” muttered my fat friend Mealy, as he stroked down his fierce-looking moustache, and wiped his mild eyes free from dust.

“And, of course, has further to fall than from a donkey’s back?” I asked.

“Yes, of course,” replied Mealy; “they tell me the road to Aden is all climbing up rocks and amongst stones—in fact, that there is no road at all. I shall certainly take a mule or a donkey.”

“And I’ll try Rozinante,” said I, jumping on his back, to the great delight of the grinning Arab, who now proposed to accompany me on foot, continually exclaiming, notwithstanding all I could say, “Good horse, saar!—go to Aden, saar!” propositions which he kept uttering in every key and in every variety of intonation from the moment he had brought the animal towards us, until we actually set off for Aden. It was useless to correct him, however, or to attempt to check him, for he did not understand a word I said; so at length

I accommodated myself as best I could to the muttered and shouted ejaculation, “good horse, saar!—go to Aden, saar!” constantly ringing in my ears.

Having inspected a mule which he found dead lame, Mealy at length determined on trying a stout-looking donkey, and mounted accordingly. We had expected to see noble animals of the asinine kind in Aden, for were we not in Arabia? and who has not heard of the superiority of the Arab asses? of their height and strength, their beauty and their docility?

The passengers by the *Porringer* must have been singularly obtuse, however, or the asses in Aden were an exception to the rule, for we could recognize no difference in outward appearance between them and the every-day donkey in England or India. Our fellow-passengers were now widely scattered over the beach, some mounted on horses, some on mules, some on asses; some trying the mettle of their steeds by reckless galloping over the uneven and stone-strewn shore, others carefully picking their steps along, but all with their animals' heads turned towards Aden, and all with a

wild-looking native behind, who was either fluttering along at a hand-gallop after the labouring steed, or quietly quarrelling and abusing another Arab as the two walked after their more sober employers. Those only who had seen Aden before, remained on board, or hired boats from the shameless Arabs to explore the harbour and its shores.

We were a polite company, we passengers by the *Porringer*, and so the ladies were accommodated with the best steeds, and some of them became them well, although their absurdly long riding-habits did not suit the road, and greatly puzzled the Arab attendants. These latter wretches were constantly making plunges at the saddles to see that all was right, and as they dived under the ladies' riding-habits and were lost for a moment in the folds, there was great fun and great screaming—fun on our part, screaming on that of the ladies.

“You go, sare! how you dare pull my leg dat way?” cried out a French countess of our party, after one of those intermittent plunges, at the same time shaking her whip at the offending attendant.

“ Ver good saddle, ver good horse, mame,” said the attendant, soothingly, quite ignorant of the cause of offence.

“ You take care, sarc, not for to come near my horse again,” said the countess ; but blackey was already deep in a wordy warfare with a neighbouring Arab, and heeded her not ; nor, had he heard her, would he have been much wiser as to her wishes.

The Count Rotamotin, who rode by her side, was rather amused at the occurrence than otherwise, and contented himself with laughing heartily at his wife’s discomfiture.

“ You don’t speak English well enough, my love,” said he, soothingly, “ for this man to understand.”

The Countess was indignant, and remained silent. In a few minutes she cantered off gracefully, the Count accompanying her, leaving us far behind.

“ Shall we try a trot ?” said I, to Mealy.

“ I have no objection to make the trial,” was the reply, “ although I fear it will be a vain one.”

A smart cut of the whip sent Rozinante off into a subdued canter ; he did not know how

to trot, had evidently never been taught ; and donkey, with Mealy on his back, not liking to be left behind, exerted himself to the utmost to keep up with us.

“ Hurra ! for long and thin, and short and stout ! ” shouted some uproarious fellow-passengers as we darted past them, our Arab attendants bounding over the shingle and sand in a wonderfully careless, easy-going manner, with bare feet, too—my self-constituted groom still muttering at intervals, *sotto voce*, “ good horse, saar ! go to Aden, saar ! ”

“ You and Rozinante are well matched,” said Mealy (laughing at us), as he laboured on a little in the rear ; “ you want but the armour and the spur, and a coat of whitewash over the steed, to personate Don Quixote to the life.”

“ And now that you put me in mind of it, Mealy,” was my reply, “ what an admirable impersonation of Sancho you do make—donkey and all.”

Thus complimentary on each other, we made our way pleasantly along, bantering and being bantered, as odd horsemen or energetic parties swept past us or were distanced by us.

The beach was soon left behind, and, whilst a rough, uneven mountain rose precipitately on our right, straight before us was the volcanic cone, broad-based, and round-shouldered, which contained Aden in its hidden recesses near the summit. On our left spread out as bleak and desolate a prospect as even Arabia or Africa could present. Distant hills of primeval granite, shining barely and bleakly in the rays of the sun, which coquetted with their angularities and recesses, sunk down into level plains of red sand, variegated by rocks of every hue and size, all stern, repulsive, wild and lifeless.

As we advanced into the hills, and saw more distinctly the summits which we were approaching, here and there interspersed with battlements and walls thrown up by British engineers against Arab marauders, battlements promising to make Aden what Gibraltar long has been, impregnable—as we advanced into the hills and discovered these things, I say, the extent and variety of the masses of stone which lay about us on every side surprised us more and more.

It was as if giants had been flinging rocks about in sport, and heaven had been raining



shingle to fill up the ugly chasms the rough giants had left—rocks of enormous size, of middling size, of small size, some dark from continued exposure to the weather, others lighter in colour, rested in every possible way on every possible ledge and projection—some standing on narrow ridges on the hill's side, as though suddenly arrested in their descent, and waiting a favourable moment to tumble on the passing traveller; others, broadly based upon wide rocky promontories, massive, firm, immovable. Grey stones and sparkling granite, and dark trap were strewn all about in admirable confusion, all volcanic or plutonic, telling of nature's combats and the results, but no sign of vegetation, no blade of grass, no wandering creeper to relieve the eye, or whisper faintly of vegetable nature.

Here and there the ribs of a camel scattered about were eloquent of suffering and death—suffering and death endured by that most patient and most miserable of animals. Who that has heard the whining lament of the young camel, as it moves uneasily its graceless limbs about, can help feeling for it and for its race? It cries continually—it seeks help-

lessly about for food or comfort—food it may get, but comfort apparently never—it never gambols like the young of other animals, every movement seems to be accompanied with pain. No one ever yet saw a young camel frisking joyfully about its mother, happy in itself and the source of happiness in others, as lambs and foals are—no, its severe life is one of early misery, crowned by later suffering and a wretched death.

The tourist who has visited the deserts of the Indus or the dreary confines of the vast Sahara of Northern Africa, will find the camel still the same; and that its life is just as wretched on the elevated plains of Thibet, and amid the salt deserts of Persia, every traveler's account assures us. There is something inexpressibly affecting in those memorials of the most patient of animals, which one meets so constantly in the dreariest places of Oriental travel—the bones of the camel are landmarks over the desert, they are like the wreck at sea, that speaks of a gallant vessel broken up and destroyed—who shall tell with what misery and hardship the tale of its loss, if rightly told, would abound?

A strange sight it was to see this dreary re-

gion of rocks and sand, dotted over with life and vigour—men and women, of various, and for the most part, of far distant climes, with horses, mules, and asses, all busily urging on their way, and almost all in one direction—a long string of camels, the nose of the one behind tied to the tail of the one before, alone making its way, slowly, solemnly, silently along, in the opposite direction.

The camels' bones were unheeded even by the camels themselves, and, as they journeyed on laboriously, one could not help fancying that they had too many sorrows of their own to attend to, to waste a thought on those of others. Some of our fellow-passengers were now climbing the narrow gorge through which alone entrance can be obtained into the strange caldron-like valley in which Aden lies imbedded,—they and their steeds dotting the sides of the eternal hills curiously—the only signs of life where all else was sternly bleak and wildly desolate.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## A LUNCH IN THE CRATER OF A VOLCANO.

AT length it came to our turn to ascend the rugged hill before us. At its base, however, a strange-looking cavern on our right attracted my observation, and, as it was inaccessible to the quadrupeds, I dismounted and climbed to it. There was nothing particular either in its aspect or situation, and was of far less extent than I had anticipated. I therefore speedily descended, and found Mealy sitting on a rock waiting for me. He, too, had dismounted, partly to relieve his donkey, and partly to cool himself. He looked as if he were moralizing inwardly upon the vanity of human and asinine life.

With a huge pith hat covering his head and eclipsing his features, his rotund figure cased in white, looked like a bag of flour thrown carelessly on the rock with a white umbrella above it. He was supporting his chin on his hands, and his elbows on his knees, his eyes resting mournfully on the plump donkey which stood before him, motionless, and reflective perhaps, as himself. His Arab groom was lying at full length by the ass's head, whilst my Rozinante was held at some distance by his owner, who reclined uneasily on the sharp rocks. It was altogether a picture worthy of the pencil of a Cruikshank, or the pen of Punch himself to delineate.

I sat down by Mealy, and we watched several fellow-passengers disappearing in the gorge above, whilst a Bombay soldier on guard, paced mechanically backwards and forwards like an automaton—and truly an automaton he was, wound up, clock-like, by his matutinal meal, to pace backwards and forwards under those formidable masses of masonry above him, for so many hours without cessation. A well-trained monkey would do as much with equal effect.

“There go the Countess and her husband,” said Mcaly, as they disappeared in the pass, “we shall be late for the luncheon;” so, springing up, he proceeded to mount his donkey.

I was speedily walking on quietly, Rozinante evidently disposed to take it easy, when I heard the sounds of blows, and imprecations too in choice English and Arabic, all showered upon the plump-looking donkey, who did not feel disposed to go. I turned round. Seated in the saddle, Mcaly was belabouring the unfortunate animal with his light riding-whip, making as much impression on the tough hide beneath him, as he would have made with that implement on the rock which he had just left. His Arab groom laid on more heavily behind with a walking-stick, stopping every now and then to see what effect his blows had. They had none—a fact which, speedily discovered, was the cause of a renewal of the flagellation.

At length, seizing the bridle, Arab pulled with all his might forward, and donkey, as resolutely, threw his weight to the rear.

“Stop!” said I, “I’ll bring Rozinante up

by his side, and, perhaps, he may persuade the beast to move."

For a moment the blows ceased, even the kindly wishes showered upon the asinine head were hushed. Rozinante stalked gravely with his long legs by the side of his diminutive companion ; it even struck me that he looked reproachfully at him, as if such conduct were not what ought to have been expected in *his* company. The asinine head stuck out the long asinine ears as if meditating a move, and then, as we passed on, quietly replaced them on the neck. It was still no go ; and, as a fresh shower of blows descended on the imperturbable donkey, I could not help laughing at his repose, and the sweltering heat into which he was putting Mealy and the groom.

At length, my groom, assistant, or guardian, whichever he might be considered, went to their assistance. Planting himself behind the contumacious donkey, he placed his back against the animal's tail, and, sticking his feet furiously into the shingle, pushed with all his might, whilst Arab number two pulled vigorously in front, and Mealy belaboured in the middle. But all to no

purpose ! Donkey's feet were resolutely set for a shove backwards, and the united force of the three did not stir him an inch.

"Do you know," said I to Mealy, "that animal must be remarkably strong to withstand all that ?"

"And as obstinate as—" replied Mealy, his simile broken short by a fresh volley of abuse in choice Arabic, to which the donkey submitted uncomplainingly.

"You will have to dismount," said I, at length.

"I fear I shall," was the reply ; "I am in an extempore bath as it is, and a continuation of this will melt me."

"And the luncheon ?" I suggested.

Mealy was off in a moment.

"Good ! good ! ver good ass, saar !" shouted the groom when he saw him alighting ; and, taking the bridle, he proceeded to turn donkey's head towards the harbour. The donkey moved round without the slightest difficulty, and his groom then proceeded to turn him dexterously round three or four times, Mealy and I admiring the manœuvre, until at length, he ceased, walked him on a little, and then showed by signs that



donkey was now ready to proceed. With the patience of a martyr, Mealy mounted again, and we walked on quietly side by side, as if nothing particular had happened. Nor did donkey again exhibit his strange idiosyncrasy.

Cantering quietly up the pass, we at length entered the gorge leading into the snug little valley in which Aden is situated—a gorge that nature has herself rendered almost impregnable, and which man, with the aid of rocks, mortar, and cannon, has rendered completely so. There is certainly no power in Asia to take Aden, whatever the more advanced science of continental Europe may be able to accomplish. The nation which rules the Indian ocean must inevitably be also the ruler of this rock-bound fortress, for, useful as stone is to keep out intruders, it will not do for food ; and, as all the supplies for the garrison must be brought from sea, the possession of the harbour of Aden must lead to the possession of the fortress itself.

A descent of a few minutes' duration brought us into the middle of the little town. Nestled in the very centre of a 'semicircular valley, with jagged peaks rising on every side,

Aden is, perhaps, unique in its position. It is not likely that human necessity or human ingenuity has established a town anywhere else, in the very middle of the crater of a volcano—an extinct volcano, it is true, but still what once was a volcano, undoubtedly. One cannot help speculating, indeed, on what would probably be the effect of the volcano's renewal of its activity, and where Aden would be in that case !

In itself, independent of its extraordinary position, the town presents little that is interesting or striking to the eye of the visitor—the rugged peaks, with their well-worn summits, ever pointing heavenward, which surround it, are its chief features of interest. A detachment of Bombay troops constituted the garrison, their lines forming a distinct quarter of it. Some of the men we found had been two years in the town, without having once extended their peregrinations beyond the limits of the little valley—they were living, in fact, in a rock-caldron—a caldron in more senses than in its shape merely—and they had no desire to see what was round it.

The wildest of nature's scenes lay within

short distances on every side ; the boundless ocean to the south, the rugged hills of Arabia to the north ; but they recked not of such, they were perfectly contented to live as they had lived, without an eye to see the glories of creation, or a heart to feel them ! Other Orientals, shop-keepers and such-like, had lived for still longer periods within the dreary confines of the rock-bound valley, some of them, indeed, ever since the English occupation of it, without once passing the frowning battlements that secured them from the lawless aggression of the Bedouins.

The educated Englishman, condemned to pass any large portion of his life in such a place, is surely to be pitied. What number of rupees or gold mohurs can recompense a man for selling the best years of his life in such a way ? or be an adequate remuneration for burying himself alive in the crater of a volcano, from which he is, *perhaps*, afterwards to emerge, mentally unsuited by habits and tastes for the distant land he has left, or physically unable to endure the vicissitudes of its climate ? Such a life is spent in regretting the past and abusing the present—in sighing in

Aden for what has been relinquished in England, and again in grumbling in England for the want of physical luxuries enjoyed in Aden !

The town itself presents the usual aspect of the black town or pettah of an Indian city. It has little or nothing to distinguish it from the native quarters of Madras or Colombo—the same thatched or tiled roofs—the same exhibition of articles of commerce in the verandah—the same lazy shopkeepers voluble of tongue and indolent of body — the same groups of half-naked or entirely naked children, of every shade of brown, from the whity-brown of well-milked coffee, to the deepest black of the negro.

The Muhammadans are, as usual, the most energetic of the native populace, jumping to their feet at the sight of an intending purchaser, with an alacrity that it makes the more sluggish Hindu hot to contemplate. The only hotel in the town, if hotel it could properly be called, was kept by a Muhammadan, and, as an express had been sent on previously to tell the proprietor to have a first-rate luncheon ready, we expected to find every thing comfortably prepared for our reception.

We found the Count and his lady, with three other fellow-passengers, awaiting our arrival, and, in a few minutes, were informed that our meal was ready for us. There was little at the table save English biscuits that we could eat; but, if the viands were bad, the various beverages with which they were to be washed down were good, and we complained little.

Refreshed and exhilarated by what we had taken, we proceeded to inspect the town on foot—Mealy escorting the Countess, and the rest of us following without much order or regularity. We met various groups of our fellow-passengers in the course of our peregrination, all, like ourselves, looking very red and very hot, and very much determined to enjoy themselves before being again shut up in our floating prison.

Having contrived to make the acquaintance of the Commandant, Mealy obtained a decent horse from him, with which to ride back to the shore, and therefore accompanied the Countess, telling her Arab guardian that if he proceeded to take any liberties with her feet—the lady herself said “legs,” but Mealy knew that was a mistake—he, Mealy, would lay his horse-

whip over the offender's shoulders unmercifully.

To enforce his words, my benevolent friend looked as fierce as possible, whilst his dragoman for the occasion (one of the Commandant's servants) was translating all that he said. The Arab explained that he had merely been putting the saddle right, as these female-saddles, as he described them, were very likely to become displaced on a road with so many ascents and descents as that from Aden to the shore.

"Leave the care of the lady and her saddle to me, sir," was Mealy's energetic and imperative reply, "or else—" and with that he carved imaginary welts out of tawny's back with the horse-whip.

The Arab said no more; the last argument being unanswerable.

With the exception of having once to stop in order to adjust the Countess' saddle, for which purpose she alighted, we reached the harbour in safety—Mealy escorting the lady and "witching the world with noble horsemanship" the while, whilst the Count and I rode on quietly behind. It was quite evident,

however, from the entire displacement of the “female-saddle,” occasionally that Arab’s plunges into the lady’s riding habit were far from useless, however inconvenient to the horse-woman. Arrived at the shore we found those abominable native sailors, in their own original costume, ready and anxious to take us on board. The shades of evening were fast gathering round us, however, and we were not particular, so, making our way cautiously into the largest boat we found in the vicinity, we were speedily deposited, in perfect safety, upon the quarter-deck of the *Porringer*, feeling tired after our journey and pleased at our return, just as if the ship were really our home, and Aden only a Kew or a Richmond in its vicinity.

The heat in the Red Sea, as we steamed rapidly through its luke-warm waters, was intense, and there was just sufficient of a favourable wind to prevent our feeling any agitation of the air whatever, inasmuch as the wind travelled *pari passu* with us—had it been against us, or from any other quarter, indeed it would have been cooling and refreshing, but no—directly up the sea it blew, keeping pace

with us as easily as an English race-horse would with an Aden donkey at full speed, but not outstripping us, nor leaving us an inch behind. A truly tantalizing wind !

“ Were I the Captain,” said Mealy, energetically, during a melting mood one day, “ I would turn the ship’s head round and stop her for an hour every day, if it were only to prove that there really is a wind, and to get the vessel aired a little. What’s the use of a man’s constantly making an assertion and then reiterating it over and over again, if he can’t prove it—particularly such an assertion as that, so easily capable of verification if true ?”

“ But you must remember,” said I, “ that we and the wind are going in the same direction, at about the same speed—hence it is we don’t feel it, hence it is the smoke ascends so quietly and perpendicularly from the funnel ; were there no wind, the smoke would be left behind, and we should feel the air being cut through by the vessel.”

“ All which amounts to this,” quoth my fat friend ; “ that there is a wind because I don’t feel it, but if I *did* feel it, there would be no wind.”



“A strange way of putting it truly,” was my reply, “but not the less a correct one.”

“Now look here,” said he, argumentatively, “here’s this chess-board. I say the chess-board is here, because I both see it and feel it, but if I could feel it only, I should still be sure of its proximity to me; now to apply your logic and the Captain’s, if the chess-board could not be seen or felt it would be here, but if it were not here, it would certainly be felt. Why, sir, do you suppose that any man of ordinary sense—hang it, sir! I’m not—”

“The chess-board and the wind,”—I began interrupting him, but it was too late. Indignant Mealy had risen from his seat, and, mopping his bedewed countenance energetically, he turned and went away in a rage.

After the bleak rocky shores of the south of Arabia, and of the island of Socotra, which we coasted shortly before entering the Red Sea, the first glimpse of Mocha and its environs was a relief both to the eye and to the mind. Since we had left the tropical luxuriance of Ceylon, not a green spot of any extent had refreshed our sight. Rocks,—bare,

rugged, bleak, stern, impracticable rocks—had bounded our view on every side, whether we looked towards Asia or Africa, and now, as if from the waters of the ocean, by enchantment, rose a fairy city and a fairy scene. The white roofs and the glistening minarets, and the rich green which formed a background to the picture, and even covered the hills behind, were all so unlike what we had seen, and what we had been gazing at for so many days, that we regarded the entire panorama with great interest and pleasure.

Had we landed and inspected the town, our impressions of it would have been different I was told—narrow, filthy streets, the hot sun drawing up reeking pollution and the most abominable complication of vile smells to be found out of Lambeth, from the offal-strewn lanes and by-ways. But all this we were spared—of all this we could see nothing from the shore,—nothing but the white house-tops shining joyously in the twinkling sun-shine, nothing but the glistening minarets with their picturesque heaven-pointing ornaments, nothing but the vivid green of the trees contrasting so richly with the bleak red and brown of the rocks and the yellowish

green of the sea. It was a bright spot in the bleak panorama passing before us, such as the eye and the memory love to dwell upon—a bright spot suddenly disclosed and rapidly lost, lost before we had been satiated with gazing upon it, and hence the more regretted.

The very name, Mocha, is so associated with coffee, that our excellent Captain astonished us that day at dinner, when he informed us no coffee was now exported, or had for a long time been exported thence—that the cultivation of the shrub there had gradually been diminishing, and that the production was not sufficient to supply the demand of the neighbourhood.

“Then where does all the Mocha coffee come from?” asked twenty voices in a breath.

“I’m telling you a simple fact,” replied Captain Spoon, blandly, “I do not pretend to explain every thing connected with it. This I am sure of, the Mocha coffee does not come from Mocha, so I suppose it comes from somewhere else.”

This was allowed to be a very sensible supposition, and the matter was set at rest after sundry “*dear me’s!*” and “*well now’s!*” ac-

accompanied by looks of virtuous surprise—calling things by wrong names astonished us all.

Chess, back-gammon, draughts, cards, and even quoits, formed the chief amusements on board the *Porringer* during the weary voyage up the Red Sea—yes, quoits too, quoits made of rope, instead of iron, and pitched into circles instead of at a peg, a very inferior game to the original, but still sufficiently amusing and scientific to wear away an idle hour when one is in anticipation of that most melodious of sounds in an “Overland” steamer, the dinner bugle. No man can fail to recognize ever after the tune of the “Roast Beef of Old England,” who has steamed from Ceylon to Suez, so eagerly are the notes listened for, so musical do they sound to those who for four or five weary hours of oppressive heat have not known what to do with themselves.

Day after day the same wearisome monotony of rocks and sand presented itself, sometimes nearer, sometimes more distant, but constantly the same. Doubtless, the shapes of the rocks varied, although even that fact

some were hardy enough to dispute ; but that was the only change—in every other respect it was like a vast panorama of red and white rock-mountains, relieved by red and white shingle and red and white sand, stretching along interminably on either side.

Even the excellent view afforded us, as we entered the Gulf of Suez, of Mount Sinai, and the interesting group of which it forms the centre, was scarcely sufficient to rouse our curiosity or excite us to animation. Like the rest, like a thousand others that we had left behind—only a little more distant and more loftier—its tall jagged cliffs and precipitous summits stood bleakly, desolately, prominently forth, clearly traced upon the glistening, reddish-blue of the sky behind, without a single peculiarity to distinguish it from the numerous similar mountains we had passed. But what it wants in physical features association supplies—none who allow that association to act, can pass it without peopling the base of the rugged mountain with a vast multitude, their straggling cattle gleaning a scanty subsistence in the adjacent valleys, whilst they peer anxiously into the mysterious cloud that enve-

lopes the summit, into which cloud their law-giver has passed, and in which he has disappeared.

Such a scene is easily traced upon the surrounding desert by the pencil of the imagination, and he who has once traced it there, will not willingly let the remembrance die. Nor will he regret the fatigue or *ennui* of a monotonous voyage, if it leads to such consummations as a distant view of the wondrous Sinai, and opens the portals of a land so famed in Biblical and classical history as the land of Egypt.

As we gazed upon the wilderness in which, for so many years, the wandering Israelites journeyed to and fro, preparatory to entering upon the Promised Rest, we could not help remarking to each other, that, in such a place, it was no wonder they should long again for the flesh-pots of Egypt, or look back with sighs to the banks of the Nile and the verdant country they had left. Those who feel astonished at the ungrateful conduct of the Israelites, have but to take a comparatively easy voyage up the Red Sea in order to per-

suade themselves that murmuring, discontent, and rebellious reproaches were the natural results of their position—that content and gratitude would have been unnatural and therefore improbable. The blessings of freedom they were by no means disposed to weigh against the material advantages of Egypt—the iron of slavery had entered into their souls, and was still rankling there.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## THE OMNIBUSES OF THE LAND OF GOSHEN.

THE bleakly monotonous voyage from Aden to Egypt is fitly ended by the desert city at which the voyager lands. Suez, like Aden, is a city *sui generis*, not probably to be found paralleled elsewhere. Yet it is most unlike Aden. Here there are no frowning mountains of volcanic rock, no wild scenery that puts one in mind of the *debris* of giants' battles. All is level, or merely undulating, far as the eye can reach—undulating sand, unvaried desert. For miles out to sea from the town itself, the water is so shallow, that the boatmen who convey the passengers a-shore from the steamer, are as often pushing their unwieldy craft along with their hands, whilst they wade



over the soft yellow sand, as they are sitting quietly within it, rowing, or walking to and fro, shoving it on with long poles.

The extremity of the Suez Gulf of the Red Sea sweeps, shallowing gently, over miles of fine sand, and where that sand first appears permanently raised, Suez has been built. The wide desolation of the desert surrounds it, a horizon of sand and stone meeting the reddish blue of the sky on three sides, whilst on the fourth the arm of the sea is visible, stretching far away to the south, one side of it bounded by the inhospitable rocks of the wilderness of Sinai, the other by the no less sterile shores of Africa.

Not a drop of fresh water is to be found in the vicinity of Suez; for miles the luckless traveller will find no trace of such, let him search never so diligently on every hand; all is sand, and stone, and sea—bleak sand, ugly stone, and a dangerous sea, a sea over which the Simoom of the desert wafts its blighting influence too often, filling every crevice of the exposed ship or steamer with clouds of fine sand, striking down in a fainting fit the strongest and the most muscular, and carrying

off to the wide bourne whence no traveller returns, the weaker or the more enervated.

Suez itself looks more like a city of the dead than of the living. Its flat-roofed oriental houses crumbling to decay, with here and there a sickly shrub forced into a kind of dying life by man's obstinacy and perseverance, are so indicative of desertion and misery, that one can scarcely fancy himself in a city or a town containing a living, breathing population, men, women, and children, such as constitute towns elsewhere. Casting the eye over the apparently illimitable desert that surrounds it, a train of camels, — those toiling desert-ships, — is seen winding its way along in single file, most gloomy-looking, most melancholy.

There is something in the very aspect of the burdened camel that appears to tell of pain and suffering: the long, ungainly legs shambling about, the huge joints bending as if with springs; the rolling burden now thrown on one side, now on another, as the two legs on each side are simultaneously raised and then simultaneously depressed; the raised head and drooping neck, bent in, not proudly arched upwards like the horse's, all are cha-

racteristics of patient endurance and long acquaintance with suffering, such as one pities and commiserates. Wending its way toilsomely and slowly over the desert, the nose of the one attached to the tail of the other, the train of camels makes its way along without a sound, almost without the appearance of life, a few men with long staves walking by the side, or else mounted uneasily on the burdens, dozing amid their merchandize.

The whole is a scene of truly oriental character, quite unlike what one is accustomed to in the West. One expects such a scene in the desert, and wonders it is so like what, from a child, he has pictured to himself; it is but the realization in actual life of what his imagination, guided by sketches and descriptions, has often bodied forth in the mind.

A vast number of camels were in waiting upon the beach, ready to receive the luggage and the mails, and to take them to Cairo. As we landed from our Arab boat, we saw them lying about on every side, chewing the cud peacefully, occasionally waving their long necks about from side to side in monotonous motion. The attendant Arabs were seated on

the sand in circles, some gambling, others discussing political matters—the last incursion of the Bedouins, the effect of the new Tanzimat, or the contrast between the rule of Mehemet Ali and Abbas Pacha in Egypt ; others, again, repeating to each other alternate tales, tales similar to those of the Arabian Nights' Entertainments, and merrily did the long beards wag in laughter as they concluded.

Our caravanscrai — the Suez Hotel, as it was styled—was what might have been expected, a large and somewhat ruinous building, inclosing a square in the centre ; the lower rooms mostly intended for cattle or merchandize, the upper as habitations. Round the square, on the inner side, ran a balcony or verandah, communicating with all the rooms, the favourite lounge of servants and gossips, who could hence descry what was going on in the court below, and the opening of any single apartment.

We had a breakfast at this nondescript establishment—a breakfast at which one might fancy some of the workmen from Babel were the parties appeasing their hunger. French, German, Spanish, and English were spoken at

the table — those that had Hindu servants addressed them in Hindostannee, whilst one gentleman from Hong Kong, with a Chinese valet, was great in the uncouth tongue of the celestials, and did not fail to sport it on such an occasion ; his servant spoke English far better than he spoke Chinese, but that did not matter, Chinese he would speak, and he did,—after a fashion.

The servants of the establishment swore at each other in choice Arabic and vulgar Egyptian, and in the midst of all this, we bolted our meal like Americans, knowing that the omnibuses were to be soon ready to take us over the desert.

French, German, Spanish, English, Hindostannee, Chinese, Arabic, Egyptian, clattered, and grated, and rushed against each other on the quivering air, whilst knives and forks, and cups and saucers, with all the other paraphernalia of a civilized breakfast, clicked and rung and sounded continually, joining the Babel chorus. What an amount of work the unfortunate air in that long, barn-like room had to accomplish ! Verily, if one *could* feel pity for such an object, *it* was to be pitied—so tortured,

and twisted, and gyrated and vibrated, elaborately tortured, intricately twisted, vehemently gyrated, and incessantly vibrated.

The omnibuses were soon ready—omnibuses to convey us over the desert to Cairo!—the thing sounded strangely to the uninitiated, but was a fact, notwithstanding. Outside the walls of the town—for even Suez has what serves for such, hard walls for Bedouin men and Bedouin horses to knock their heads against—outside of these, we found the omnibuses awaiting us. Each of these conveyances was intended to hold six, and was drawn by four horses, helter-skelter over the wide waste, no road made, no road required.

We had drawn lots for the omnibuses before leaving the *Porringer*—the very evening indeed that we presented our address to Captain Spoon, informing him what a noble ship he had, and what a kind man he was, and how he conveyed us in perfect safety to Suez. These new and entertaining facts related to him, he wrote to us to say how grateful he was, and how grateful the officers of the ship were, and how happy he was, and how happy the officers of the ship were, and how proud he

was, and how proud the officers of the ship were. This imposing ceremony completed, slips of paper with six names on each had been handed in—the six who wished to be together in an omnibus for a twelve or fourteen hours' ride—these slips were mysteriously placed in a mysterious urn—a soup tureen—and violently shaken and intermingled by Mr. Crabby, the purser. The fair Mrs. Plugget was then requested to insinuate the ends of her fingers into the mysterious “urn,” and to draw out one of the said papers, which she did heroically, although very much at the same time as if she suspected a snake were in the said mysterious “urn,” and great was the laughter as she drew thence a piece of paper containing six names,—a singular fact, particularly when it is remembered, that there was one with only four, and that all the rest *had* six.

Then the six on that paper were thus settled to go in the first omnibus, and mightily did they congratulate themselves ; for stopping in Suez is neither interesting nor agreeable. The heroic Mrs. Plugget pulled out another and another paper, and Mr. Crabby, whom, with the

other officers, we had been just assured was so happy, looked red and worried as he wrote the names hastily down on a sheet prepared for the purpose, begging and beseeching of Mrs. Plugget not to be in a hurry, all which mightily increased the hilarity of the company. But the laughter became outrageous, when Mrs. Plugget pulled out her own paper almost last, that on which her own name and party were written, and although offers were made by devoted bachelors of an omnibus near the beginning of the list, she would not hear of such a thing, she positively would not, and insisted on enjoying the full luxury of her misfortune—a misfortune which she had anticipated, nay, foretold more than once.

Thus had it been decided as to the order in which we should leave Suez—batches of four omnibuses at a time left the inhospitable town, with six passengers in each. There was an interval of some hours between the departure of each, and as it took four batches to clear us all off, it was evident that some would be enabled to study the curiosities of Suez at their leisure. Great was the merriment of those first off, as they contemplated the long faces



of the *détenus*, and with wonderfully lachrymose sympathy did they bid their more unfortunate fellow-passengers *farewell*—the unfortunates turning disdainfully on their heels, and sullenly retracing their steps to the “Hotel,” as party after party swept off.

Baron Rotamotin (whom the English sailors insisted on calling “rotten mutton”) and his Countess had been fortunate enough to secure seats in the first batch—Mealy and myself went in the second. As we had none of the fairer members of the human species to take care of, we had made up a party of our own, in which we had collected those of the more agreeable kind whom we could obtain, apart from the trammels of family and party. It was pleasing to have for our long journey, of more than seventy miles over the bleakest of all bleak deserts, companions who would not complain of a little jolting, or object to a cigar.

To those in rude health, who do not care for a little fatigue, the drive across the desert is interesting and amusing, save when the dust-storms prevail. We fortunately escaped this infliction, although for the most part prepared for it by green veils depending gloomily from

our hats. To the invalid, or the nervous, however, this strange wild jaunt is a perfect torture—over mounds of sand and over obtruding stones the vehicle rattles along with its four wild Bedouin horses at full gallop, the still wilder Bedouin coachman urging them on faster. The invalid feels his head and his heels playing, as it were, at hide-and-go-seek with each other, as he is jolted now to one side and then to another, now rising abruptly over a rugged rock, and now sinking into a profound abyss, in the most reckless and apparently insane manner. The nervous individual again feels confident that such reckless driving can but end in an upset, calls out to the driver energetically to be cautious, and he, shaking his head and nodding, without understanding a word of the entreaty, assures the excited passengers that he'll make them go, whilst he cuts up the leaders more furiously than ever. It is of no use, and sinking back in martyr-like resignation, nervousness resigns itself to its fate.

After a time, however, and when, over rocks and sand and camels' bones, the omnibus has still driven on unscathed, at the same wild rate, nervousness begins to take courage, and

looks forth at the bleak desert again — the coachman is evidently running a race with the Jehu of another omnibus, descried at some distance. The vehicles approach — there is a good little piece of hard ground ahead, which both wish to take possession of, and from afar, the two vehicles, rattling along at a hard gallop, gradually draw nearer and nearer — “they will certainly dash against each other,” says nervousness, as he watches, with agonizing eagerness, the rapid approximation — “Coachman ! coachman ! you will certainly upset us !” he shouts, unable longer to control himself ; “*do* be cautious !”

“Coachman” is the only word the grinning Arab understands, as he exhausts his vocabulary of abuse on the male and female relatives of his rival. It is an appeal to him, — as he understands it, — to drive quicker, and not to allow them to be beaten by the worthless son of his mother who drives the other vehicle.

“Bismillah !” he replies, “but the knave shall not beat us — be not afraid my lord — our horses shall walk over his unsavoury carcass before he gets a-head.”

With this comforting assurance, nervousness

is obliged to rest content—not that he understands a word of it, it being spoken in Bedouin Arabic, but he fondly flatters himself that he has drawn the driver's attention to the danger, and that they are therefore safe. As he sees the huge whip gyrating over the vehicle, however, and descending forcibly on the hind quarters of the leaders, who are plunging manfully along, regardless of consequences, he sees that his efforts have been vain, and resigns himself to his fate again.

Had any one taken a peep into our vehicle, as we were thus hurled over the inhospitable wilds of one little corner of Africa, he might have doubted whether the individuals within belonged to any recognized type of humanity. Few, very few, think of shaving on board ship—in long voyages men become more natural, and less dandified and puppyish—by the time Egypt is reached, therefore, there is a stubbly growth of a fortnight covering lip and chin,—a growth of all varieties of hue and shade, that looks anything but picturesque or interesting. The six who occupied our omnibus were as hirsute a community as one was likely to find out of Germany; and when, to the nascent beards and

moustaches, are added the various hats and veils that covered and partially concealed these brush-looking faces, the entire picture will form anything but an every-day scene.

Some men were deep in the widest possible wide-awakes, the edges tortured and twisted, and convoluted and squeezed into a vast variety of patterns ; others wore straw hats, some purchased at Moses and Son's, others made on the banks of the Ganges at Monghyr, and others by Chinese in Canton ; wide-awakes and straw hats were in the majority, but one unfortunate individual of the party had a regular white beaver hat—that is, it had once been white, but having dropped into the sandy water at Suez, was now in part of a sea-green hue, the rim, however, for the most part, retaining its original silky brilliancy. In front of all these head-dresses depended the indispensable veils, green and blue, through which glimpses only of the odd faces within could be obtained by our imaginary inspector.

I would venture to assert, that a sharp French gend'arme, or an Austrian inspector of passports, would have found our little company a hard nut to crack. So accustomed

are we to see veils on the soft attractive faces of the fair sex alone, that, after we got fairly into the desert, and began to inspect each other, it was some time before we could do so without laughing.

Not that we ever discovered the utility of the appanages — we had all been solemnly warned, however, on no account to go across the desert without them, and accordingly we wore them. Having made a similar remark to a mercantile friend, who had frequently been backwards and forwards, and knew the line as well as a London omnibus conductor knows the streets on his route, the reply was—“ Ah, it is evident you did not cross at the proper time—in November they are of no use—you should go across in June, when the dust-storms prevail, in order to experience the utility of the veil.” I have never since felt disposed to try the experiment, and must, therefore, continue to protest, that as far as mine and my friend Mealy’s experience went, the veils were useless.

At convenient distances in the land of Goshen, houses have been erected along the route, at which refreshments are prepared for the

voyagers, and excellent accommodation and excellent dishes, considering where we found them, were to be had in these houses. The keen desert air gave us all excellent appetites, and irrespective of conventionalisms, for once in our lives we found ourselves sitting down to dinner and enjoying it heartily, on one occasion only, at two o'clock in the morning. It is a positive fact, that although at such an outrageous time, the dinner tasted as well, and was as much relished, as if it had been then only the orthodox Indian dinner-hour of half-past seven. On the whole, with the exception of the wild way in which the vehicles were driven, and the total want of any thing like a road, we found the arrangements admirable, and rather enjoyed than otherwise the arduous undertaking of "crossing the desert."

Arrived at Cairo, we took up our quarters at the Hotel d'Angleterre, a large, commodious house, in which we found only a very small instalment of the vermin nuisance we had been led to expect. Perhaps, as in the case of the veils, we did not arrive at the proper season; but certain it is, that there were not those "fearful swarms of every kind of vermin" of

which we had been premonished. This was a disappointment, and, as Englishmen will grumble, Mealy declared that having made up our minds to endure the plague of insects, it was too bad to cheat us out of the luxury of being enabled to complain of them afterwards. However, we had to endure the disappointment, and slept all the sounder in consequence.

I say we found there only a small instalment of the plague we had expected to encounter in all its virulence. The majority of us found nothing of the kind to complain of, but a few declared that they had lost their sleep, or, at least, a portion of it, from the attacks of the parasitic insects with which their beds abounded.

It is not my intention to describe Cairo—it has been too frequently described already. Every one knows all about the citadel, and the mosques, and the Egyptian women, and the Turkish and Arab shops, which form its chief attractions. Every one has heard how narrow some of the streets are, and how a loaded camel coming down one of them, sweeps all before him, making the passengers precipitately retreat into archways and shops, to avoid



being knocked down by the swinging load that moves from side to side upon his back.

Every one has heard also of the poetical cries of the Egyptian salesmen, as they recommend their wares to the passers-by,—although but few Europeans understand them when they hear them. Every one has heard of the Mameluke's leap, and the Pasha's palace ; and, in fine, who has not read accounts of the ascent of the great pyramid, until he has almost wished Egypt were prohibited to Englishmen ? We hear, too, of the marvellous effects produced upon weak nerves by the first sight of the pyramids ; we hear of enthusiastic ladies and gentlemen of “ fine nervous temperaments,” being thrown into a kind of wonderment-*coma* by the vastness of the structures and the imposing length of unvaried wall, which appears to stretch out to infinity.

All this is very pretty, and sounds very well ; but, although neither a resident of Manchester, nor in any way connected with the cotton trade, I will venture to say, that one of the lofty chimneys of the manufacturing districts of England, if gently tapering towards the top, and isolated at the bottom, will give the ob-

server who stands near its base a better idea of infinity than the great pyramid of Ghiza—the best idea that brick and mortar *can* give of it.

Our intention being to remain in Cairo for a fortnight, and inspect its often-described *lions*, Mealy and myself bade our fellow-travellers farewell ere they quitted the hotel for the river steamer that was to take them to the canal leading to Alexandria. The Baron Rotamotin and his amiable wife, Mrs. Plugget, and Mr. and Mrs. Hondhy from Ceylon, we saw them all depart, and felt lonely as we returned to our apartment when the last batch of them had been driven from the court-yard, so strangely were we affected by the loss of the society of those of whom, three weeks before, we had known nothing.

A short paragraph ere I conclude, anent the slave-market of Cairo. We had not been many days in the city, ere our dragoman proposed an expedition thither; and we assented with pleasure, wondering that we had not thought of it before. We were taken on donkeys as usual, through an infinite variety of narrow streets, brushing the knees of the male

and female riders that happened to meet us in our journey, and often astonishing the honest pedestrian by catching him in the spine with our knee or foot when our dragoman would insist on a trot or gallop. We were at his mercy, and were forced to submit ; jolting and jostling, and being jolted and jostled, we made our way along to the entrance of the slave-market. Turning down a narrow court, dismounting from our Egyptian donkeys, and following the dragoman through a half-ruined gateway, we stood at length within the slave-market of Grand Cairo.

A square court-yard was before us, round which rose buildings of no great height, the front, as usual, in the south and east, protected by a low verandah that ran quite round the enclosure, supported on rude wooden pillars. Seated in the sunshine were groups of slaves, principally Nubians, men, women, and children, some in little clusters, some singly, some playing upon the court-yard, the sun's rays dancing upon their jet-black skins. A few grave-looking Turks, the owners of the slaves for the most part, were enjoying the chibouk in other parts of the enclosure, and eyed us with any-

thing but friendly glances as we inspected their wares, knowing well that curiosity, not commerce, had brought us there.

“There is no misery, no squalor,” we repeated to each other in a breath; “they all seem happy and contented.” “Do they generally look thus?” we asked of the dragoman.

“It is the same all the days I have come,” was the reply, in dragomanic English.

The black articles of merchandize looked at us and smiled, the children, for the most part, continuing their games without heeding us; old men and young ones, old women, matrons, and girls inspected us attentively, and talked incessantly as they did so. We walked round the yard, and peeped into the places where they lived within the verandah. They were infinitely more comfortable and less filthy than the dwellings of the labouring classes in the south of India. The clothes the poor wretches possessed were neither very voluminous nor very fine in quality, but they were more than sufficient for their ideas of decency, and the hot sun of Africa prevented them feeling the want of more; a scanty cloth round the loins was all the covering they had, and they were con-

tent with it. The children were naked, and happy and healthful apparently, as children ought to be.

“ ‘Tzaffa !’ ” called out a fat pursy Turk, who was diligently fumigating in the corner of the yard ; a graceful young girl of fourteen or sixteen years of age bounded to her feet as she heard the call, and going towards her lord, salaamed respectfully as she approached him. She was elegantly formed—her figure might have served as a model for the sculptor, so firm, graceful, and undulating in its outlines—but her face was Nubian, and contrasted disagreeably with the fine form. Receiving some order from her fat master, she went into an adjoining room and brought him something he required. He took it from her hand without a word. Making a low obeisance, and returning to the group she had left, she sat down again, and commenced talking immediately.

We knew nothing of ‘Tzaffa’s’ history or of her character, but she interested us much, and was frequently afterwards, when we were far away from Cairo, a theme of conversation. Often did we speculate what her fate had been, and what the feelings with which she endured

it. Tzaffa ! Tzaffa ! the name alone was sufficient to interest us.

We left the slave-market of Cairo with the conviction that thousands of our own countrymen and countrywomen—that tens of thousands of the natives of India—were more, far more, to be pitied, than the Nubian slaves there exposed for sale.

## 'PAGES OF CEYLONESE HISTORY.

It would be well for Ceylon and its inhabitants were its history better known to Englishmen generally, and were its affairs brought more prominently before the British public. No one who has visited the island, can help feeling an extraordinary interest in all that appertains to it. Unfortunately for its people, however, its history is not so intimately connected with any portion of that of Greece or Rome as to render the island an object of interest to the classical student. It was but faintly known to the Greek and Latin geographers as Taprobane—they had some indistinct idea that some such island, rich in pearls, cinnamon, and elephants, existed somewhere in the recesses of the Indian Ocean—and that goods came from it that had been con-

veyed from a far more distant shore, that of China.

Few untravelled Europeans, indeed, realize to themselves the size of Ceylon. They probably look upon it as a sort of counterpart of the Isle of Wight, or Malta, and are possibly incredulous when informed that it is very nearly of the same size as Ireland—Ceylon containing 24,600 square miles, and Ireland about 28,800. They have their doubts, too, when told that it once contained at least five millions of inhabitants, and can still exhibit ruins of cities, once of vast extent, and of buildings that almost rival the pyramids of Egypt in size and age.

But that which more than anything else evidences the greatness of Ceylon in by-gone times, is the fact that it has a continuous history of itself, which extends from five hundred years before Christ up to the period of the Portuguese invasion in 1505 A.D.—a history proving that the people of Ceylon were once a powerful and refined nation, and that too, long ere Julius Cæsar had invaded Britain, or the Celtic inhabitants of these islands had learned the rudiments of civilization. South-



ern India and the Eastern Peninsula were successively the scenes of the warlike exploits of the Ceylonese in their days of greatness—their conquests, it is true, were but transitory, still, however, the gaudy pagodas of Burmah and Siam bear testimony to the truth of Singhalese history, for to those countries Ceylon gave its own religion, Buddhism ; and they have ever since retained it. In the hope that a perusal of some of the facts of this history may induce the reader to seek fuller and more explicit information on the subject elsewhere, I here present him with an epitome, originally compiled, after considerable research, for an Indian periodical. It will be considered by many *dry* reading, I doubt not—hence its position at the end of the second volume.

The Chinese, Burmese, and the natives of India are all claimants for the honour of having originally peopled Ceylon. It appears most probable, that, when the neighbouring shores of the continent were occupied, the narrow island-studded strait between would be passed, and the rich plains of northern Ceylon be provided with inhabitants. Fable identifies it with the scene of the contests between Rama

and Rawana, the heroes of the great Hindu epic, entitled the *Ramayana* ; but, leaving the region of fable, which it might be curious, but would scarcely be instructive to enter, we naturally turn to the religious books of the island for its early history ; and of these books there is no lack.

The founder of modern Buddhism, Gotama or Gaudma—impelled by the reputed sanctity of the island, we are told, a sanctity celebrated long before his time—visited it, to raise from their degradation the debased inhabitants. Of this indefatigable reformer many wonderful anecdotes are related, as having occurred during his visits to the island ; and of these, not the least miraculous, in the eye of the Buddhist, is the fact of his having known by intuition the places hallowed by the touch of former Budhas—knowledge which his admiring disciples could neither dispute nor deny. Anxious to connect still further the history of their country with the life of their great man-god, the Ceylonese historians inform us, that on the very day of Budha's death, the founder of their subsequent royal dynasty landed on the island.

This founder, Wijaya by name, is stated to have been a prince driven by his father, the king of a district of modern Bengal, from his home and country for his misdemeanours. With a considerable band of equally reckless characters with himself, he directed his course to the sea, and having sailed from Bengal, attempted to land on a part of the coast of India, where he was violently opposed. He next directed his vessels to Ceylon, and there succeeded in making good a settlement (554 B.C.). By a fortunate alliance with the daughter of a chief, he established himself more securely; and she, violating patriotism and paternal love for the advantage of her newly-found spouse, aided him in a cowardly massacre, whereby the chief rulers of the island were destroyed, and Wijaya left supreme.

He was not long in taking every advantage of the superiority he had gained, and by sending his followers to found cities, throughout the island, of which they were to be the chiefs, dependent only on him as their feudal lord, he fixed himself securely in the sovereignty, 540 years before the Christian era. His long reign of thirty-eight years was embittered but by

one misfortune,—he was childless, and the fair kingdom he had gained was in all probability about to pass soon into the hands of another family. Perceiving this, and anxious to prevent it, Wijaya sent to his father, whose favour his achievements had now won for him, requesting that Panduwasa, his younger brother, might be sent to succeed him.

A voyage from Ceylon to Bengal was then something like what the circumnavigation of the world would be now, and Panduwasa did not arrive till a year after the death of his distinguished brother. Fortunately for him, a minister of Wijaya, possessed of the rare virtues of moderation and fidelity, had preserved the government for his master's successor, and instead of having to re-conquer the kingdom, as under other circumstances he might have been obliged to do, he seated himself upon a peaceful throne. The Buddhist historians inform us that he married a cousin of their celebrated prophet Gotama, and thus again they connect the history of the island with that of the founder of their faith. Unlike his brother, Panduwasa left behind him ten sons and three daughters, and con-

nected with one of the latter, Unmansit, a romantic tale is told, which I shall lay before my readers.

On Panduwasa's death it had been prophesied by certain Brahmans that the offspring of Unmansit would destroy his uncles and dethrone the reigning king Abhayo, who was one of these uncles. This the superstitious princes believing, had their unoffending sister, who is represented, of course, as having been exceedingly beautiful, closely confined. But "love laughs at locksmiths," saith the proverb. A prince of the royal family caught a glimpse of the fair captive, whom he also wooed and won. The consequences of their intimacy could not be concealed, and, to avoid open disgrace, Abhayo and his brothers were forced to consent to a marriage, on the condition, however, that should the offspring prove a son, he should be immediately destroyed.

The offspring *did* prove a son, but, with the aid of her faithful attendant, the same whose assistance facilitated the former intercourse, Unmansit saved his life by the substitution of a female infant, lately born, and introduced into the apartment clandestinely.

Abhayo discovered the fraud, sought to destroy the boy, but in vain, as he had the favour and protection of the priests. Yet the consequences of his endeavours were by no means unimportant. Looked upon as the child of destiny by the people, Pandukabhayo, the persecuted youth, soon found himself at the head of an army, and after a long and wasting war, succeeded in dethroning his unnatural uncle.

During his and his son's reign, Ceylon appears to have been rapidly advancing in improvement and civilization—the capital city, Anuradhapura, was embellished with works of art and architecture, the remains of which may still be seen, nearly 2300 years after their erection;\* villages and towns were starting up in districts which the tide of population had probably never reached before; the country was divided into districts, over each of which civil and judicial magistrates presided; tanks and canals were constructed to facilitate cultivation, and, in fact, the island was advancing with rapid strides to prosperity and eminence.

\* A description of some of these ruins will be found in *Forest Life in Ceylon*, vol. ii. chap. 6.

I shall now pass on to a remarkable fact in the history before me—that of the introduction of Buddhism in a systematic form. This happened in the reign of Tisso the First, about 300 years before our era. Tisso being about to enter into alliance with Dhammasoko, a King of India, noted for his enthusiastic love of Buddhism, sent him a present borne by the chief of his nobles, in return for which, the religious Dhammasoko sent, along with presents, advice to Tisso “to take refuge in Budha, his religion, and his priesthood.” Not content with sending advice alone, however, Dhammasoko persuaded his son Mahindo, a high priest of the Buddhist faith, to accompany Tisso’s ambassadors to Ceylon, and his reception by that monarch was such as to leave him little ground for regret at his determination.

Mahindo entered upon his proselytizing career with zeal and success. Multitudes flocked to hear his discourses, numerous priests were ordained, colleges were established, temples reared, and Buddhism finally installed as the religion of Ceylon. The females were not to be outdone in the career of piety. They requested a priestess to raise

some of them to the priestly office, and, in accordance with their request, a sister of Mahindo was sent for and obtained, who should establish a sisterhood of nuns, and thus put Buddhism on its proper footing in the island. These communities, although essentially a part of the faith, have been long suppressed in Ceylon, although, I believe, they are still to be seen in Burmah.

With Sanghamettra, the female high priest, came also a branch of that holy tree under which Gotama had attained his Budhaship (the bo-tree, or *figus religiosa*), which was planted in Anuradapúra, on the spot where, at the present day, the wandering tourist may observe the spreading branches of "the great bo-tree at the Maha wiharo," amidst whose branches—safe in that sacred retreat—thousands of monkeys and other animals disport.

Tisso was not backward in exhibiting his faith in Buddhism, by the erection of many splendid buildings devoted to its service. The remains of some of them, especially those of the Thuparamaya Dagobah, may even now excite our admiration. Ten years after the death of Tisso (B.C. 256), we for the first time



hear of the Malabar race interfering in the government of Ceylon, and the event is an important one, inasmuch as it was but the prelude to numerous instances of incursions and rapine committed by the same race.

Suratisso, the reigning prince, took into his service, during a period of profound peace, a large body of mercenary cavalry, commanded by two Malabar chieftains, called Sena and Gutika. These generals so well ingratiated themselves into the favour of the whole army, that on their raising the standard of insurrection, Suratisso found himself completely deserted, and ended his life and reign by his own hands. Sena and Gutika, now supreme, divided the island between themselves, and reigned, with an iron rule, for upwards of thirty years, when a counter revolution replaced the sceptre in the hand of Asela, a prince of the royal family.

Asela, however, was not allowed to reign in peace. Elala, a Malabar leader, landed at the mouth of the Maha Velli River with a large army, marched directly towards the capital, was met there by Asela, and gained a victory, which gave him the crown of Ceylon. This

he enjoyed for a lengthened period, and it was not till old age had weakened his intellect and unnerved his arm, that he found a claimant for the throne in every way worthy of him as an enemy. The royal family had fled to Rohona, and a descendant of Tisso's brother, who held that, the south-eastern district of the island, as his province, Gaimono by name, alone dared to oppose the usurper.

Youth, lofty hopes, and a vigorous intellect were in favour of Gaimono; a settled government, full treasury, and former renown, were the supporters of Elala.

But Gaimono was no ordinary opponent: his measures were full of boldness and vigour, without rashness. Fort after fort fell beneath his arms; and in a decisive engagement with Elala, he killed the latter with his own hand, and then occupied his throne. A relation of Elala's, who came to his assistance with an army of thirty thousand men, was equally unsuccessful, and, on defeating him, Gaimono found no one able or willing to dispute his sovereignty. His piety now became as conspicuous as his military prowess had been; and of his religious exertions, sufficient remains exist

to satisfy us that the Ceylonese of that period were considerably advanced in architecture, sculpture, and refined taste, whilst the size of some of these monuments, and the vastness of the tanks which he excavated, may convince us that the city during those years must have been populous and magnificent.

The particular account which the native histories afford us of the construction of one of these buildings is such, that most students have doubted its correctness, whilst those who have not examined the evidence, have positively pronounced it an exaggeration. As in other instances in this history, however, where truth is concerned, an extended investigation has, in this case, but confirmed those accounts. We are told that it was erected on sixteen hundred stone pillars, and of these the greater number are still standing, whilst fragments of the rest lie near their original situation.

We are also informed that the interior was decorated in a way which might lead us to believe that the fancy of the writers heightened the description, but this has also been confirmed by the narrative of the Chinese Buddhist, Fa Hian, who in the fifth century visited

Ceylon, and whose narrative has been translated and published in Paris. Him we can scarcely suspect of any motive for exaggeration, or, if we did, we must still account for his description tallying with that of the *Mahawanso* and *Ratnakare*, the native histories.

Besides the temples and other religious erections attributed to Gaimono, we read of hospitals for the sick being established throughout the island; roads formed, and officers for the preservation of order appointed by his directions and exertions. The reign of Gaimono is one of the best evidences we possess of the state of the country at this early period, a subject on which I cannot dilate at present.

I shall pass over a few succeeding reigns, in which there occurred apparently no event of material consequence, till we come to that of Walagambahu, who ascended the throne about one hundred years B.C. By an invasion of the Malabars, who were now, fatally for Ceylon, too well acquainted with its riches, he was driven from his throne, and obliged to conceal himself in a remote district of the island: for fourteen years this exile continued. Chief after chief of the invaders having during

that period been rulers, and usually falling by the hands of their successors. These disturbances, we might imagine, would have afforded some opportunities to the dethroned monarch to expel the invaders, but this does not appear to have been the case, and for that long period the island was a prey to anarchy and confusion. On reascending his throne, a scheme of the monarch's, formed in exile, was put into execution, and that was to have the discourses of Budha, then but orally transmitted from one generation to another, committed to writing. For this purpose, a meeting of the oldest and ablest priests was called. Different versions of the sermons of the prophet were collated and compared, and after a lengthened investigation, the voluminous Pitakattaya and their commentaries, the Atthakatha, the sacred books of Ceylonese Buddhism, were committed to writing.

Two of the dagobahs, whose remains at the present day most prominently attract the visitor's attention, owe their erection to the piety of Walagambahu, and one of these (the Abhayagiri) was originally upwards of four hundred feet in height, equal to the elevation of the topmost pinnacle of St. Peter's at Rome.

The next remarkable feature which the history of Ceylon presents to us, is the reign of a monster of wickedness, in the person of a Queen Anula. She was the wife of Walagambahu's son, and put an end to the life of her husband in order to reign alone. One victim after another was raised to the dangerous seat vacated by his predecessor, and these appear to have been chosen on account of their personal appearance, to gratify the depravity of the insatiable Anula. In this way five victims were dispatched in the course of as many years, until the world at length becoming weary of her, she was dethroned and executed.

Her successor had no easy task in bringing order and regularity out of the confusion worse confounded caused by the irregularities of Anula; and it was not till three or four peaceful reigns had passed, that the kingdom attained its former prosperity. "Happy is that people whose annals are tiresome," was the exclamation of a philosophic and thinking mind; and if I were asked to point out the period of Ceylonese history when the country appears to have been most flourishing and contented, I should certainly select the most

uneventful period of its history — the first five centuries of our era. During that time, order and peace for the most prevailed. Tanks and roads were formed, Buddhism was in its glory, the royal family established, and every thing promised a long career of prosperity.

We have positive evidence as to the flourishing state of the kingdom at this period, both in a material and intellectual point of view. The first is confirmed in a curious way, both in the far East and the far West, by a Buddhist priest of China, and a Christian priest of Rome. The Buddhist, Fa Hian, formerly referred to, visited Anuradhapúra, the capital, in the fourth century, and tells us that nothing could equal its magnificence and extent.

Numerous magistrates, nobles, and merchants, he informs us, dwelt in it. The houses were spacious and handsome, the public buildings magnificent and highly ornamented. The streets and roads were broad and straight, whilst at the corners, numerous lecture rooms were erected, in which the doctrines of Budha were daily expounded. The very fact of a distinguished Chinese Buddhist proceeding to Ceylon in search of the authentic

writings of his prophet, shews the importance of the island at this period—so much for Eastern evidence. The Western is to be found in the writings of St. Ambrose. A Theban, he informs us, visited Ceylon and the Malabar coast of India in the fourth century. There he was detained by a Malabar prince, subject to the king of Ceylon, for six years, and he only regained his liberty on a rebellion of the tributary, which was punished by an army sent from the island, and that army delivered him. In speaking of this event, he describes the king of Ceylon as “*the great king*, who lived in the island of Taprobane.”

From the writings of Cosmas Indicopleustes, it also appears that at this period a very extensive trade was being carried on between China and Ceylon on the one side, as well as between Ceylon and the Persian Gulf on the other. From these facts, as well as from that of the buildings whose remains now exist, having chiefly owed their origin to this period, I conclude that for two centuries preceding, and five centuries succeeding, the Christian era, the island was populous, powerful, and flourishing. Nor does literature appear to have



been neglected, inasmuch as to the time under review, Ceylon owes its best historical, scientific, and poetical compositions, of which, however, the first only can be appreciated by the English reader, none of the others having yet been translated.

Some romantic stories of the various kings who reigned from the fifth to the eighth century, compose the chief part of the history of these periods. I shall neither stop to relate them, nor to investigate their truth ; suffice it to say, that from the violent deaths, the numerous insurrections and invasions which followed, it may naturally be concluded that the prosperity of previous periods was being gradually merged in the turbulence of the succeeding, and that a gradual decline in the arts of civilization and refinement was contemporaneous with a more scientific mode of warfare, and more attention given to that destructive art itself, than to the arts of good government or the wants of the people.

The period of the transference of the seat of government from Anuradhapúra, the ancient capital, to Pollonaruwa, appears to have been coeval with the decline of the former town. This

event happened about the latter end of the eighth century, and from that time may be dated the neglect of the buildings and the gradual dilapidation of the former capital. Indeed, shortly after, the fact is stated of a person having been deputed by the king at Polonnaruwa to proceed to Anuradhapúra to repair and restore the buildings of the latter town. From this period, too, may be dated the rapid decline of the island in power, prosperity, and population. Inroads from the coasts of India, and attacks from bands of roving Malays, became more and more numerous and frequent—insurrections multiplied in the mountainous districts of the island, and everything was in a state of turbulence and disorder.

In this condition it can be easily imagined that numerous bands of soldiers were scattered over the island, and that, in fact, its inhabitants were assuming a military character. Such being the case, nothing was wanting but a military leader of eminence to render it a conquering country, and this it found in the twelfth century, in the person of one of its most enterprising and talented monarchs, who

was certainly the greatest military leader Ceylon has produced. Of the birth and boyhood of this wonderful hero, Prackrama, numerous miracles are recorded with the utmost circumstantiality, whilst a particular account is also handed down of his youthful education.

The Buddhist faith, logic, grammar, poetry, and music are all mentioned as subjects in which he became extraordinarily proficient, whilst horsemanship, archery, and the management of elephants were not neglected. When he had gone through the whole circle of the sciences, as then taught by the most learned priests, travelling was considered still necessary to fit him for the duties of his station. On returning to his native land, he received the throne by the voluntary resignation of its possessor (Gajabahu) — a resignation which appears to have been made, however, in favour, not of Prackrama himself, but of his father, Wickrama. A dispute arose in consequence between the two claimants, which ended in the accession of the son ; and shortly after, a reconciliation took place between him and his father, which happened just before the latter's death.

On obtaining quiet possession of the kingdom,

Prakrama entered upon an enlightened career of improvement, which proves him to have been no ordinary character. The formation of roads, canals, and tanks, which are particularly mentioned in the native annals, and numerous remains of which are now visible, prove the utility of his exertions. Libraries (chiefly of Budhistic works) were collected for the colleges of the priesthood—the poorer classes were aided in reclaiming waste lands—and, if native authorities are to be credited, the whole island was rendered prosperous and happy by his exertions.

This state of peaceful progress, however, was soon disturbed by the notes of warlike preparation.

A tributary princess, in the most hilly and remote district of the island—Rohona—was determined to oppose the advancing reforms of Prakrama; and Subhala, the lady in question, having once taken the resolution to resist, prepared to oppose her superior with vigour and determination. The account of the warfare is handed down with sufficient minuteness to enable us to form some judgment of Ceylonese tactics at the time.

The fortified places, we are informed, were surrounded, by her orders, with large and deep moats. The roads leading into the province were rendered impassable to elephants and cavalry, by being strewed with large trees, and stakes fixed firmly in the ground. The uncovered sides of the hills were defended by briars and brambles plentifully scattered over them. These preparations completed, Subhala posted her army in the immediate vicinity of a fortress which commanded the only accessible road into her territories, and there awaited the attack. Prakrama, on his part, was not idle—a force greatly superior in numbers to any which the Rohonians could bring into the field, was dispatched under Rakha, one of his most experienced generals, whilst the king himself remained to superintend the improvements progressing by his directions.

Rakha advanced with all the celerity circumstances would admit of, to meet his enemies. Harassed as his troops were by the obstacles in their way, they yet surmounted them all with great bravery, notwithstanding the opposition of the Rohonians, and at length a general battle was offered and accepted. By

a skilful disposition of his forces, and a judicious choice of ground, Rakha was enabled completely to overpower the more impetuous out less cautious mountaineers—a defeat and rout were the consequences. The Rohonians attempted to throw themselves into the fortress formerly mentioned, but Rakha was no sluggard in pursuit. Both parties entered together, and the fortress was taken in the *mêlée*.

Scarcely was this great advantage gained, when Rakha found his communication with his own capital intercepted, and his army actually besieged in the fort which he had taken. Strong reinforcements were sent to his aid by the king, and at length so overpowering a force marched into Rohona, as to preclude the possibility of further resistance on the part of Subhala. Surrounded in her capital, and unable to resist, she accepted the terms offered, and by an absolute submission saved her life and tributary title.

An imposing ceremony was conducted at the capital by Prakrama in consequence of this victory, during which the native historians, one and all, inform us, that a miracle was exhibited — a special mark of Buddha's

favour. This miracle consisted in the occurrence of a thunder-storm, and a copious fall of rain, at the very time when the gorgeous procession, with Prakrama at its head, was proceeding to the temple of thanksgiving; and yet, wonderful to relate, not a drop of this copious shower touched a single thing engaged in the procession, although it fell plentifully around! The confidence with which this miracle is related, and the reiteration of it by the various native historians, is a curious fact in the history of the native character.

The court at Pollonaruwa, however, speedily found that their thanksgiving was premature; the submission of Subhala was but a prelude to a vigorous preparation for a renewed contest on her part, and scarcely were the rejoicings at an end, when the trump of war again sounded in rebellious Rohona. Of the campaign which ensued, we are not supplied with the particulars so minutely as in the former case. All that can be gathered from history is, that it was obstinate and bloody—that the Rohonians lost two battles, both of which were obstinately contested, and in the latter of which twelve thousand Rohonians were slain or taken. The

siege and capture of Subhala's capital was the last act of the tragedy, and there is reason to believe that her temerity, when led as a captive before her conqueror, caused her death.

The peace of the district was subsequently ensured by the vigorous measures of Prakrama, and these were generally so successful, that profound tranquillity reigned throughout the island. It was not till after the year 1169 of our era, the sixteenth of his reign, that the monarch found it necessary again to assemble his forces and to face an enemy. Now, however, they were to be turned against a foreign foe—not to be engaged in civil commotions. The king of Cambodia and some other provinces, in the Burman Empire, had roused the just resentment of Prakrama by plundering certain Singhalese merchants and slighting his ambassador. To avenge these insults, the king strained every nerve to fit out a naval expedition, capable of grappling with the numerous ships of his enemy, and of conveying his army to the eastern peninsula. By these exertions a fleet of five hundred sail was quickly prepared, an officer of renown was put at the head of the expedition, and the armament was



dispatched. They sailed to Cambodia, landed at a port called Kúsuma, whither the enemy advanced with precipitation on the first intelligence of their appearance. A battle was fought, in which the Cambodians were totally defeated, and Adikaram, the general of the Singhalese forces, followed up his advantages by an immediate march to Camboja, the capital, which the precipitate haste of its king had left utterly defenceless. This was speedily taken, and with it all the treasures and resources of the sovereign. The fortified places were surrendered in consequence, a viceroy and annual tribute appointed, and the whole country was declared subject to "the great and glorious Prakrama-bahu, King of Ceylon."

Thus successful in his first expedition against a foreign foe, Prakrama next turned his arms against the kings of the district in Southern India, called in the native annals Pandi and Solli—on the Malabar and Coromandel coast. The motive of this invasion is but faintly exhibited, as some real or fancied grievance. Endeavouring to land at Madura, the general of Prakrama found a force so considerable drawn up to oppose him, as to render the dis-

embarcation impracticable. The expedition then proceeded up the coast to Tellicherry, where they again found a force prepared to oppose them—they made the attempt, however, to land, and, after a hard-fought battle, succeeded in driving the Pandians from the shore. One action after another succeeded, but generally so much to the advantage of the Singhalese, as to put the greater part of the country into their possession. In the last and most decisive combat they were thoroughly successful, and the consequence of it was the submission of the entire country. The reigning prince was dethroned, and his son, as a tributary of Prakrama, was placed upon the throne.

Such are the principal details handed down to us of the reign of Prakrama the Great. He died in the year 1186 of our era ; and had his measures been imitated by his successors, Ceylon would have been in a different condition when first visited by Europeans. A period of anarchy and confusion followed, however, in which the foreign conquests were lost, and many of the internal improvements neglected. But one short interval of nine

years elapsed, in which a step was made in the right direction.

With this exception, the entire course of Ceylonese history from 1186 to 1505, was one of rapid retrogression. Civil wars, domestic commotions, and external aggressions, combined with the apathy of the natives ; all conducing to reduce the island from the flourishing state in which Prakrama left it, to the condition in many places of an uninhabited wilderness. The tanks were neglected, the embankments of the canals were allowed to fall in, the bridges were unrepaired. Every foreign invader extorted from the wretched inhabitants and the weak princes every particle of wealth they could not by subtlety conceal, and Malabars, Moors, and Malays, all found it their interest to make incursions into Ceylon. The evils of a disputed succession commenced the decline, the aggressions of foreign foes increased it, and the natural apathy of the native character allowed it to continue.

That the people who inhabited Ceylon at the time of Wijaya's invasion must have been barbarous in the extreme, we should have concluded from the facts of that invasion, had it

never been asserted by the native historians. The attainment of supreme power by the chief of a band of but seven hundred followers, and the extension of that power into the remoter provinces, proves at once, that the native princes were at variance with each other, and not in any case capable of effectual resistance. It is true that the means employed by Wijaya for the establishment of his authority were those of cunning and artifice, not of open force—yet still the civilization of himself and his followers must have been infinitely superior to that of the natives, or he could not have succeeded in his enterprize ; and in what the civilization of Bengal, whence Wijaya came, then consisted, we are pretty well aware from the Hindu annals.

From this period, then, we may date the introduction of improved habits and manners into the island, an improvement which, from the dispersion of Wijaya's followers, would gradually extend itself in every direction. The three centuries which followed, till the reigns of Sena and Gutika, the usurping Malabars, although not wholly undisturbed by warfare, were yet eminently fitted to pro-

mote and extend the improvement already begun. The establishment and embellishment of towns seem to have been the first object of their exertions, and the remains of the more important of these, which still exist, prove what their population and perseverance must have been. The faith of Buddhism, so congenial to their dispositions, received a great proportion of their attention, and in the erection of buildings in honour of the faith, many of the kings delighted to pass their days.

But with Prakrama this state of things, promising as his civil and military abilities had made it, ended—the Ceylonese, by habits, religion, and disposition, were essentially unwarlike, and they relapsed on his death, into that lifeless apathy or irresolute and fitful disturbance so common in the East. Anarchy, civil war, foreign invasion, and weak princes, completed the evils which had arisen on the death of Prakrama, and at the beginning of the sixteenth century little else was visible but the wreck of that which had once been a magnificent and flourishing kingdom.

On the testimony of both eastern and western writers, the conclusion arrived at is,

that the trade of the island at one time was extensive and lucrative. Ceylon was the entrepôt for the commerce of China on the one hand, and Arabia and Persia on the other. Hither, merchants from the east and west of Asia came, mutually to exchange the commodities and productions of their respective countries—a traffic which must have considerably enriched the country in which it was carried on. Of this trade the Moors on the western, and the Malays on the eastern side, appear to have been the principal carriers ; and from the accounts which they carried back with them of the island they had visited, probably arose those Moorish and Malayan invasions, which we have noted as having become exceedingly numerous in the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries. To this trade the discovery of the passage round the Cape of Good Hope by the Portuguese put an end ; and as that people supplanted the Moors on the coast of India, so did they also in the traffic of Ceylon.

The gradual decline of the country in civilization and population, is admirably depicted in the ruins of the various cities, which, at the

different periods of Ceylonese history, became the capital of the island. The remains of Anuradhapura, the earliest capital, as far exceed those of Pollonaruwa, the succeeding seat of government, in vastness, elegance, and beauty, as those of Athens exceed the Egyptian Thebes in the latter respect—nor is Pollonaruwa less distinguished, if compared with the succeeding capitals. These, together with the ruins of roads, bridges, canals, and tanks unoccupied or disused, perhaps, for fourteen hundred years, are the substantial proofs which we now possess of what the island and its inhabitants once were, as well as the verifications of the accounts of native annalists, which, without this indubitable testimony, we might be disposed to doubt.

Some idea, then, of the state of the island at the period when the Portuguese first visited it, may be gathered from what has been said ; yet, to make this idea clear and distinct, it will be as well to notice in a few lines the different classes of inhabitants which it contained. The northern parts, from their proximity to the southern coast of India, were most subject, of course, to the irruptions of the Malabars,

and hence it followed that, in that quarter of the island, they had become as numerous as, or even more so than, the Singhalese themselves. It was this continual increase of a foreign and hostile race in the very heart of their dominions, which, probably, caused the gradual removal of the seat of government to the south and east by the later kings; the first capital, Anuradhapura, having been situated in the very centre of that division which the Malabars had at length occupied as their own. The general prevalence of the Tamil language, and the Hindu system of religion in this province ever since Europeans have been connected with the island, up to the present time, prove the fact of their occupation.

Besides these, however, a wild race, subsisting on the produce of the chase, and destitute of habitations, also existed; totally distinct in almost every respect from their nominal masters—the Singhalese proper. These were, and still are, called Veddahs or Beddahs, a barbarous wandering tribe, ignorant of the simplest elements of civilization.

The district chiefly occupied by them is a wild, unopened portion of forest and moun-



tain land towards the east and south of the island, whilst they are also to be found, or, at least, were to be found at the period we speak of, between the level plain which skirts the sea on the north-western coast, and the open districts of the interior, where, at an earlier period, numerous large cities had arisen. The supposition seems probable that these remarkable tribes, thus shut out from the rest of mankind, in inaccessible mountain and forest land, are the descendants of their primeval inhabitants, whom Wijaya and his band conquered, and who were gradually driven into the more inaccessible districts by the occupation of the best parts of the country. The conjecture is, at least, as probable as any other with which we are acquainted on the subject.

We have stated that the trade of Ceylon on the western side was principally carried on by the Moors, and of this tribe many enterprising merchants had settled in the island, who gradually engrossed in their own hands the entire of the transit traffic of the interior, and, by the favour with which they were received by the kings, became at length an important and

influential class. At the present time, and during the occupation of the Portuguese and Dutch, they form the most enterprising and energetic class of the native inhabitants.

Ceylon had been faintly known to antiquity by the accounts of Pliny and Strabo. Amidst much inaccuracy and exaggeration, its chief features and most remarkable characteristics are to be found in one or other of their accounts, as well as in the allusions to be found in the works of other classical writers. Thus its abounding with elephants was referred to by Dionysius, the geographer, when he speaks of *μητέρα Ταπροβανην Ασιηγενῶν ελεφαντῶν*. Onesicritus and Megasthenes described it as abounding, the former in elephants, the latter in gold and large pearls, according to Pliny, (*auri margaritarumque grandium fertiliores quam Indos*). The later writers, such as Ammianus Marcellinus, and Cosmas Indicopleustes, added little to the knowledge formerly on record, with regard to the island, nor was the information picked up respecting it by Marco Polo extensive or accurate.

He appears to have been the first, however, who noticed and described the remark-

able mountain styled Adam's Peak, on which he informs us the tomb of the progenitor of mankind had actually been found ! Ludovico Barthema, of Bologna, at the end of the fourteenth century, describes the inhabitants as by no means warlike—their arms, he informs us, consisted of spears and swords, but declares that in their contests little blood was shed, from their cowardice (*perchè sono vili*). His account, which is, at least, amusing, is to be found in Ramusio's collection. Nicolo de Conte, a Venetian, and Jerome de Santo Stephano, a Florentine, also visited the island previous to the first arrival of the Portuguese, but without adding any thing of importance to previous accounts.

It may be concluded, then, that of the extent and population of the island, its inhabitants, productions, and condition, little was known in Europe till its *discovery* (if I may use the word) by Lorenzo d'Almeida, in 1505. Francisco d'Almeida, the father of the naval officer just mentioned, was then governor of Goa, in which the Portuguese had established themselves a year or two before. Some Moorish vessels of which he was in pursuit, d'Almeida

was informed had been seen in the neighbourhood of the Maldives, and thither he dispatched his son Lorenzo with a considerable force. Strong westerly winds, however, set in before his vessels had reached the place indicated, and the result was his being driven near the coast of Ceylon, where he anchored opposite to the town now called Colombo. No sooner had the Portuguese shewn themselves on shore, than information was at once conveyed to the king that "a race of men exceeding white and beautiful" (such is the description of the native annalist) had landed, "wearing boots and hats of iron, and never remaining at rest." "They have tubes" (said the same account) "which make a noise like thunder, when it breaks upon Jugandere Parivata, and even louder; and a globe of iron shot from one of them, after flying some leagues, will break a castle of marble or even of iron."

This curious account filled the court with alarm, and the question of commencing upon them immediate war, was at once proposed in a council called for the purpose. After some discussion, however, it was resolved that an

ambassador should be dispatched in disguise to investigate the disposition of the new arrivals,—no acts of violence on their part having yet been heard of. His report was, that they seemed peacefully disposed; and his advice, that an embassy which they were about sending should be favourably received. This prudent counsel was adhered to, and on the arrival of Lorenzo's messenger, presents were mutually given and received; whilst the Portuguese would have us believe that in the treaty which followed, the Ceylonese monarch promised a large annual tribute of cinnamon. This weighty matter determined, Lorenzo erected a pillar in commemoration of the conquest of the island, and of its entire possession by His Majesty of Portugal! With so little scruple was the principle of *appropriation* then adopted!

At the period of this visit, the Portuguese historian, Ribeiro, informs us that there were then in the harbour “many ships of Bengal, of Persia, of the Red Sea, and other places, whence they had come to trade in cinnamon and elephants,” a circumstance which, if it can be credited, and I see no reason why it should

not, proves that a considerable trade was still carried on by the natives of the coast. During thirteen years which succeeded this expedition of Lorenzo, and which appears to have been an interval of internal tranquillity, we hear nothing more of the Portuguese in connection with the island. At the end of that period, Lopez Suaar Alvarengo, with nineteen vessels of various sizes, anchored in Colombo, and proceeded to erect a fort. The natives were not disposed tamely to submit to this act of invasion, and they accordingly vigorously but ineffectually opposed it. The invaders had a force sufficient to overcome all the opposition their feeble enemies could offer, and from being attacked, Alvarengo soon became the aggressor.

No army that the Singhalese monarch could bring into the field could withstand the charge of the well-disciplined Portuguese, and submission, with the promise of a tribute, was the only course left him to adopt. Nor was the invasion of their country the only evil the Singhalese had now to deplore; for on the death of Prakrama the Ninth, in 1527, the sword was drawn by rival claimants for the throne,

and the country was plunged in civil war and bloodshed. The singular moderation and ability of a third party, a chief of considerable power, and a member of the royal family, at length succeeded in quelling the commotion, by raising the direct heir, a minor, to the throne, to the exclusion of the rival combatants.

An important siege of Colombo by the natives, however, had preceded this war, in which, so strictly did they blockade the city, and with such resolution did they meet the sallies of the besieged, that, but for a reinforcement of men and provisions, which opportunely arrived from Cochin, the fort would, in all probability, have been taken.

A quarrel between the reigning prince and his brother, which occurred some time after these events, and which was followed by the revolt of the latter, was the cause of a measure of the utmost importance as regarded the future prospects of the island. This was no other than the enlistment, by the reigning prince, of the Portuguese in his service, to aid him in quelling the insurrection. The desire of Buwaneko, the prince of whom we are speaking,

was to adopt a favoured grandson as heir to his dominions, a design opposed by his brother. In order at once to secure the most strenuous exertions of his new allies in his favour, and to ensure the succession of his grandson, he sent an ambassador to Lisbon, with an effigy of the youthful aspirant and a crown, praying that the King of Portugal himself, John the Third, would be pleased, with his own hands, to place the crown upon the image, and thereby pledge himself to support the measure he so much desired; a ceremony which was accordingly performed, amid great display, in the Great Hall of the palace at Lisbon, A.D. 1541.

The death of Buwanck the succeeding year, afforded an opportunity to the Portuguese of putting their promise into effect, and accordingly the youth alluded to, under the title of Don Juan, was raised to the vacant throne, nominally as the independent prince of Ceylon, but really as the puppet of the Portuguese. He found himself opposed, however, as his grandfather had been by the prince who resisted his accession, and that with an ability and energy which quickly altered the



situation of events. The western coast, it is true, was in his hands, but the greater extent of the interior acknowledged the rebel leader. The death of this leader, shortly after he had succeeded in defeating a combined army of the nominal king's and the Portuguese forces, was far from relieving either from the difficulties of their position, for he left behind him an able, resolute, and determined son, willing and prepared to continue the conquest. This son was consequently a distinguished character in the history over which we are travelling, and under the title of Rajah Singha, *the Lion King*, frequently caused the invaders to tremble for the security of their footing in the island.

Anxious to take advantage of the death of their enemy, and ignorant of the resources of Singha, the Portuguese at once dispatched a force to take Kandy and subdue the interior. In one of the passes through which their course lay, Singha planted a powerful ambuscade, and there, at its extremity, drew up his forces to await his enemies. A bloody combat was the result; but when the Portuguese saw themselves at length hemmed in on every side, and their retreat cut off, all confidence was lost,

and besides a large force of native auxiliaries, 1700 Europeans perished in the battle. Reinforcements from Goa, however, soon enabled the authorities at Colombo to fit out another expedition for conquest and revenge, which it was determined should be sent up the river Kalany, to avoid the distress caused by marching in the low country. Singha was prepared for them; the victories of his father and himself had now given him a small force of artillery, of which he took the utmost advantage. It was posted in a convenient position on the banks of the river, and, on the appearance of the invaders, a fire, well directed and violent, was opened upon them, which they could neither pass through nor effectually oppose. A retreat was the consequence; and so well were the measures of Singha taken, that before they reached Colombo, they were exposed to another attack almost equally destructive.

Excited by these successes, Singha now undertook the siege of Colombo, but had scarcely entered upon the enterprise, when he heard of a rebellion in Kandy, which he was obliged to withdraw his army to subdue. A course of cruelty and barbarity on his part to

the members of the royal family succeeded, which makes one shudder at the horrors related ; and of this cruelty the bitter consequence recoiled upon himself when he least expected it. A second time the siege of Colombo was attempted ; for nine months the fort was strictly invested ; their provisions were exhausted, the soldiers disheartened, and every thing promised a speedy surrender, when news was brought that the son of a prince murdered by Singha,—a youth baptized by the Portuguese under the title of Don John,—had assembled an army, and was making rapid progress in the neighbourhood of Kandy. To his infinite chagrin, Singha was once more obliged to raise the siege and march against this new foe.

Don John slowly retreated to the south and east as Singha advanced, and a lengthened warfare ensued, of which no particulars are recorded. Of this warfare, carried on at a distance from the capital, the Portuguese took advantage to raise a new claimant, Don Philip, to the throne, a measure which for ever alienated from them the alliance of Don John ; the latter took the first opportunity of passing

to Kandy, and there he cut off his new rival by poison, and disarmed the Portuguese. Scarcely had this tragedy been transacted, when Singha was advancing rapidly upon his enemy. Don John speedily had his forces, now recalled, put into order of battle, and at the pass of Kaduganava the final conflict of this long-continued struggle was fought. There, for the first time, the lion king was thoroughly defeated, and at a very advanced age, even upwards of a hundred years, it is said, he died a few days after the battle, of a wound received in it. Such was the end of Singha, one of the few native princes who, by innovation on the military tactics of his predecessors, became a formidable opponent even to European warriors. This event occurred in the year 1592.

During all this time the weak and imbecile Don Philip was in the hands of the Portuguese, flattered by those around him with the *title* of King of Ceylon. Him they were unwilling to part with; and accordingly, on having, by aid from Goa, been enabled to fit out another expedition against Don John, they put his descendant, Donna Catharina, the lineal heir of the crown, at its head. But the war with

Singha had made Don John a soldier, and while the Portuguese general, De Souza, to whose nephew Donna Catharina was affianced, was advancing from the north, in all the fancied security of contempt for his adversary, his opponent was quietly awaiting him at a pass on the road, into which the Portuguese forces entered with fatal confidence. The event was what might have been anticipated. "Suddenly from every side the shrill chank and dissonant tom-tom sounded. Before, behind, on the right hand and on the left, their enemies leapt forth, and clouds of arrows, balls, and spears descended upon them : it was a moment of fearful carnage ; nothing was to be done by bravery, nothing by genius, nothing by flight. Every man was cut down in the place where he stood, and of that powerful army not a living being was saved but Donna Catharina."

Even she was reserved for a fate worse than death—Don John forced her, by the indignities she suffered, to accept of him as her husband, and thus constituted himself "lawful heir to the crown." A second expedition was equally unsuccessful, although not accompanied with such dreadful loss to the invaders.

Shortly after its termination (for I must hasten on in my survey), we find the Dutch for the first time engaged in the affairs of the island. Admiral Spilbergen arrived with three vessels at Batticaloa, on the eastern coast, and thence proceeded to the capital. There he was very favourably received by Don John; permission was given by him to the Dutch to build a fort on the coast, and to carry on a free trade in cinnamon and pepper, on condition that they should wage a war of extermination against the Portuguese.

The death of Don John soon afterwards, in 1604, left the interior once more a prey to disorder and bloodshed. Donna Catharina found herself quite unequal to enforce obedience, and, still in the prime of life, looked about for a successor to her late husband. But two princes of the royal family appeared eligible from their influence and authority, and the matter was quickly determined by the murder of one of them. Sencrat, the bolder and more wicked of the two, on the murder of his rival, presented himself to the queen, and with the consent of the nobles, she accepted him as her consort. Nothing of much importance subsequently occurred till the year

1612, when Boschhouder, a Dutch naval officer, made his appearance in Kandy, and there had the strange offer made to him of at once entering into the service of Senerat as admiral and general. The proposal was accepted, and Boschhouder proved himself, on various occasions, of infinite service to the Singhalese monarch in the quelling of insurrections and training of his forces.

The death of Catharina, in 1613, appears to have greatly shattered the stability of the Singhalese throne at this period; and were it not for the prudent advice and conduct of Boschhouder, the Portuguese would probably have succeeded in reducing the entire island. As it was, they expelled the Dutch from Cottiar, near Trincomalee, and built a fort there and at Batticaloa, for the protection of their trade on the eastern coast. Into the particulars of Boschhouder's embassy to Europe on behalf of Senerat, in 1617-19, we cannot enter; suffice it to say, that the unfortunate death of that officer on his return to Ceylon, prevented Senerat from availing himself of the aid he had obtained from Christian IV. of Denmark.

Philip, at the age of sixty-two, shortly prior to this event, gave to the Portuguese, according to their historians, a valid title to the whole island—that monarch having left it to them by will. It was not till 1630, however, when they had collected a force, which Senerat was not likely to have the means of opposing, that they resolved to take advantage of this bequest. Constantine de Saa, an experienced officer, was put at the head of this expedition, and by the caution and prudence of his operations seemed to ensure its success. The pass of Wellane, where the troops of De Souza had been cut to pieces by Singha the First, was that by which De Saa advanced upon Kandy. Here Senerat had erected a tower, the siege of which occupied some time; but it was finally taken, and thence the road to Kandy lay before them open and undefended.

Senerat, distrustful of a general engagement, had retreated to the south-east as De Saa advanced, whilst the king's son, afterwards the second Singha, harassed the march of the Portuguese in the rear. It was not till the invaders had advanced into the heart of a woody and difficult country, with a very much diminished



force, that Singha, at the head of his own and his father's army, succeeded in surrounding the army of De Saa. The native auxiliaries of the Portuguese could not, of course, be trusted, for on the very first opening of a fire they deserted to the enemy. The European force thus encompassed was left to defend itself in the midst of innumerable enemies, and in the centre of an almost inaccessible district. For two days the Portuguese bravely defended themselves against the host of enemies that surrounded them, but at length, wearied with slaughter and continued fighting—with their leader mortally wounded, and no hope of escape, even if they cut their way through their enemies—they surrendered at discretion. The consequence was, the death of all those who refused to join the ranks of the king.

Senerat, after this brilliant exploit, the success of which he mainly owed to his more able son, lost no time in undertaking the siege of Colombo, then badly defended; but the arrival of reinforcements from Goa and Cochin rendered his expedition fruitless. Shortly after, in 1634, he expired, after a prosperous reign of thirty years, the prosperity of which, he

owed, however, to Boschhouder in the early, and Singha in the latter, part. The son of Catharina, by Don John, had, of course, a prior claim to the throne on the death of Senerat ; but this claim the warlike Singha was well prepared to oppose, and accordingly he had himself crowned at Kandy with the usual solemnities, whilst his rival, Wijayapala, fled to the Portuguese. They were willing, but for some time were unable, to attempt a diversion in favour of the fugitive prince ; and when they did so, the usual difficulties, the inaccessible nature of the interior, and the numbers of Singha's forces, conspired to overthrow the project and defeat Wijayapala's hopes, whilst they gave Singha an additional force of artillery, of which he well knew the importance.

Anxious as Singha was to drive the Portuguese from the island, he was yet aware that his own forces and the powers at his command were not sufficient to accomplish this. He therefore sent an embassy to Batavia, asking the assistance of the Dutch to enable him to accomplish his undertaking. A treaty was entered into between the two powers, by which the Dutch promised their assistance, Singha

bearing the entire expense of the expedition, on the condition that all the fortified places in the island were to be finally given into his hands. Accordingly, in 1639, a force from Batavia was sent to the eastern coast, which speedily reduced Batticaloa and Trincomalee, fortresses which Singha, with a very questionable policy, immediately destroyed. The following year, Negombo and Galle, on the western coast, were also taken, on the capture of which, disagreements broke out between Singha and his allies, from the non-fulfilment of their promises, on the part of the latter, which ultimately led him to look with as much suspicion on their proceedings as on those of his former enemies. A desultory warfare between the two contending European powers in the island was the consequence,—into the particulars of which I cannot now enter.

In 1646 an armistice was concluded, which continued in force till 1654, four years after which the Dutch found themselves sufficiently strong to undertake the siege of Colombo and Jaffna, the only remaining Portuguese possessions in the island. The former of these endured a long-continued blockade, but was at length

compelled to yield by famine, during the continuance of which siege, occurred one of those horrible instances of maternal barbarity and cannibalism sometimes recorded—to satisfy the cravings of hunger. A few months afterwards, Jaffna was invaded and taken, thus completing the expulsion of the Portuguese from the island. The effects of their possession will probably never be eradicated. They have left their religion and language indelibly impressed upon the natives, forming, in this respect, a curious contrast with the Dutch—who, although they possessed the same districts for 130 years, have scarcely left a trace of themselves behind.

With the Indo-Portuguese language one can even now travel throughout the entire of the maritime, and a large proportion of the interior, provinces, whilst a knowledge of Dutch would be of as little service as a knowledge of French or Italian; and it is similar with their religion. Roman Catholicism now disputes with Buddhism the majority of professors—whilst of the Dutch Reformed Church there are not probably three full congregations in the entire island. This contrast is remarkable, although perhaps not difficult to

account for, when we consider the difference in character of the two nations—the lively, accommodating, proselytizing Portuguese, and the avaricious, stolid, and independent Dutchmen.

Thoroughly convinced, of course, as Singha must long have been, that the Dutch had no intention whatever of performing the stipulations of their treaty with him, we cannot be surprised on finding him now treating them as enemies. They, on their part, however, were content to defend themselves from his fury, without attempting, as the Portuguese had done, to mix themselves up in the contentions of the natives, at the same time that they hoped, by the obsequiousness of their conduct, and the numerous embassies with presents, which they sent, to conciliate at length his favour. His treatment of these embassies and the ambassadors was such, as the more mercurial Portuguese would not have tolerated without an attempt to be revenged. He frequently detained their ambassadors without reason, imprisoned some, and left others at large—at one time he accepted their presents, and then maltreated the bearers of them ; at another, he would neither

receive them, nor grant an audience as they desired, but threatened destruction if they did not instantly leave his territories. Such was the relationship which subsisted between the two powers. The Dutch were content with the extent of their possessions, and directed all their thoughts to increasing the profit which the commerce of the island yielded. They were merchants, not soldiers; and as every source of income was made a governmental monopoly, the character of their possession was rather that of a trading company's depôt, than of a political dependency.

In 1672 the French are first heard of in connection with the island. During that year a fleet of fourteen sail anchored near Trincomalee, under De La Haye, who sent three ambassadors to Kandy. These were favourably received by Singha, who being anxious to see the new comers embroiled with the Dutch, gave them permission to build a fort at Trincomalee. De La Haye was soon after obliged to leave for India, but before doing so, he dispatched a M. De Lanerolle to inform Singha of his departure, and of his intention speedily to return. De Lanerolle arrived at Kandy—

refused to violate "*la grandeur de la grande nation*," by acceding to the forms of the Singhalese court — and after an exhibition of childish punctiliousness and blustering bravado, so irritated Singha at length, that he was thrown into prison, where there is every reason to believe he ended his days. De La Haye never returned—he was met by the Dutch admiral, Van Goens, and totally defeated, in a naval encounter; four of his vessels were captured, the rest dispersed, and Trincomalee was taken again, and again occupied by the Dutch.

The death of Singha, in 1687, after a lengthened reign of nearly fifty years, gave the Dutch that peace and security which they so much desired. His successor, Suria, was naturally of a religious and peaceable disposition, so that whilst the Dutch were prosecuting their commercial schemes on the coast, he was endeavouring to restore Buddhism to its pristine grandeur; in order to do this with effect, he invited twelve priests of the highest order of the hierarchy from Siam.

During the twenty-two years over which his reign extended, the Dutch government

drew large sums from their monopoly of cinnamon, which they controlled and regulated by a system of policy admirably adapted to ensure the success of their intentions ; that is, to raise and prepare the spice at the smallest possible outlay, without any punctilious regards to the rights of the native proprietors, and to sell it afterwards at the highest possible rate.

In 1707, Suria was succeeded by Kundisala, his eldest son, whose unwarlike disposition, like that of his father, gave a long rest of thirty-two years (the extent of his reign) to the enterprises of the Dutch. His character appears to have been as bad, or even worse, than that of any other prince of his line. Drunkenness, cruelty, ignorance, impetuosity, and revenge were the chief and most prominent characteristics of his disposition, and by the exercise of these qualities he at length fomented a rebellion amongst the nobles, which would probably have ended in his dethronement, but for the interference of the Dutch. In an embassy dispatched by the latter, to condole with him on the death of his Queen, they described her as his “ high-born,



excellent, and all-accomplished consort ;” a proof that if a compliance with the Eastern arts of flattery and dissimulation would have secured their conquests, they were far from despising them.

In the characters and conduct of the Dutch governors, we find a striking proof of the necessity for a rigid system of supervision over colonial rulers. Without a free press, or an intelligent population beneath them, and at a distance so considerable from the supreme government, some of them launched out into a series of barbarities seldom read of in the annals of civilized people. Thus, one of them, Vuist by name, determined to render himself, if possible, an independent sovereign, and for that purpose proceeded to the persecution and destruction of every Dutch officer whom he supposed likely to oppose his schemes ; whilst the patriotic opposition of those officers was visited by a barbarous refinement in cruelty on their unoffending wives and daughters. At length, in 1729, three years after the commencement of his government, a few patriotic soldiers banded themselves together, to arrest the monster. He was accordingly seized and

conducted to Batavia, where he was tried, and suffered for his crimes.

Another, and that the very governor who succeeded Vuist, bent on aggrandizing himself, took a monopoly of the rice trade into his own hands, and, as a very great proportion of the rice consumed in the island is imported, obliged the unfortunate natives to buy it at his own price. Grain was refused to all—even to those formerly in comparative affluence, whose whole resources had been previously expended in purchasing it, famishing as they were,—unless they could bring the stipulated price. It was not till 1732 that this heartless villain, Versluys, was obliged to relinquish his infamous traffic, by being deprived of the government. A few exceptions, and some of them highly honourable to the Dutch character, are to be met with in the history of their governors, amongst which the names of Falck, Van Goens, and Van Imhoff are honourably distinguished. By their exertions, the agriculture of the maritime provinces was improved, and pepper, coffee, and cardamoms added to the exports of the island.

It was in 1766 that the first English em-

bassy from Madras arrived at Kandy, Mr. Pybus being the ambassador. On this occasion the friendship of the English for the reigning prince was dwelt upon, and assistance offered against the Dutch, in the war which had just then broken out between the two powers. This assistance, however, the Madras government found itself afterwards unable to give, and the Kandian court was left to carry on the war on its own resources. This measure on the part of the English was exceedingly unjust and impolitic,—unjust, because war was not then being waged between Britain and Holland; and impolitic, inasmuch as a promise was made which was never fulfilled. In 1782, however, under the governorship of Lord Macartney at Madras, war having been declared with the Dutch, that nobleman dispatched a land force under Sir Hector Munro, and a fleet under Sir Edward Hughes, to attack the possessions of Holland in Ceylon. With this expedition Mr. Hugh Boyd, one of the reputed authors of the Letters of Junius, was dispatched as ambassador to the court of Kandy. The fort of Trincomalee was speedily invested and taken, and on the departure of

Mr. Boyd to Kandy, the admiral found it necessary to proceed to Madras for repairs. Before his return a French fleet had arrived in the harbour, taken the fort, and so fortified it, that on re-visiting it, Sir Edward did not consider that prudence would warrant an attack. Mr. Hugh Boyd in the meantime went to Kandy, and on his return to join, as he supposed, his comrades, fell into the hands of the French. Such was the conclusion of the second attempt at interference made by our countrymen.

The third, which occurred in 1795, was more successful. General Stewart, in the course of that year, attempted, and succeeded in, the reduction of Trincomalee, after a siege of three weeks, the only siege his enemies endured in the contest. The Dutch forces were at this period totally disorganized—their forts were continued scenes of riot, dissipation, and mutiny, whilst the officers had not power to check these disorders. Shortly after the reduction of Trincomalee, General Stewart advanced against Jaffna, where he met with no resistance, the fort being surrendered on the first summons. Early in 1796, Negombo

was similarly surrendered, on the occupation of which, the British forces lost no time in advancing against Colombo. The only opposition here met with—such was the supineness of the Dutch authorities—was in a single sortie of a regiment of *Malays*, headed by M. De Raymond, a *Frenchman*. This sally was vigorously repelled, and before all the dispositions for a siege had been completed, the fort was surrendered. Galle, Matura, and Batticaloa, followed the example of the capital, and thus, without a struggle from its European occupants, the rich maritime provinces of Ceylon were yielded to the British. The possession of the interior, however, was not so easily and bloodlessly obtained.

Such was the inglorious termination of the Dutch occupation of Ceylon. If their conduct and proceedings in that island are to be taken as a sample of their colonial government, I can only say that any territory which comes under their control is to be sincerely commiserated. The military despotism and religious bigotry of the Portuguese were certainly not so injurious to the native character as the commercial rapacity and total selfish-

ness of the Dutch; and although we find them taking some steps to procure the conversion of the Singhalese to Christianity, we find them also taking the surest means of inoculating them with hypocrisy, by preventing any but *professing* Christians from obtaining employment in their offices.

The next object of the British, on obtaining possession of the Dutch settlements, was to remove those injurious impressions which existed in the breast of the reigning prince against them. These suspicions had been engendered by the previous embassies, which had so fatally miscarried, and in the expulsion of the Dutch without any communication made to him on the subject. The professions of the ambassadors were received coldly, and answered unmeaningly, nor was it till Rajadhi's death (which occurred in 1798), that the sentiments of the Kandian court underwent a change. The first Adigar, or prime minister, Pilame Talawe by name, resolved to take advantage of the death of Rajadhi for his own aggrandizement. He, therefore, elevated a youthful illegitimate son of the last prince to the throne, conscious that he should

thus obtain the real, whilst his creature held the nominal, sovereignty. The other members of the royal family were imprisoned by the usurper, and Múta Samy, the Queen's brother, alone succeeded in reaching the English. On the arrival of Mr. North, afterwards the Earl of Guildford, to assume the governorship of the British possessions in the Island, Talawe was not slow in opening a communication with him, promising, if encouraged, to murder his sovereign, and assume the crown as a tributary prince. These proposals, in the open injustice of their original formation, Mr. North did not encourage, but proposed that the King and court should reside in the British territories, whilst Talawe should govern as Viceroy at Kandy. To this neither the King nor Talawe would agree, and the negotiations accordingly ended in no important result.

In 1802, however, a difference arose between the Kandian and British authorities, which produced a wasting and destructive war. The plunder of some Mohammedan merchants proceeding from the coast into the interior, was made the ground of demanding

satisfaction by the authorities at Colombo. This the Kandian court would not give; and accordingly, early in 1803, General Macdowall and Colonel Barbut were ordered to advance on Kandy from Colombo and Trincomalee, respectively. They arrived at, and took possession of, the town, which was completely deserted, and there they proclaimed Múta Samy King of Kandy and of the interior. A treaty was then entered into with him as an independent sovereign, which contained numerous stipulations in favour of his new friends. Amongst these, one article declared that a tract of land stretching directly through the heart of the Kandian territories from Trincomalee to Colombo, should be ceded in perpetuity to the English for the construction of a road, and another, that a British force should be stationed at Kandy, to secure the new sovereign from the violence of his mountaineer subjects.

While these transactions were proceeding at Kandy, Pilame Talawe, the general of the native forces, was hovering about the town and cutting off the communication with Colombo. So well were his measures taken, that in a



short time the roads to the interior from the coast were impassable to small detachments, and Kandy became, in fact, a blockaded town.

In this condition he again opened a communication with the British general, offering to deliver up the young king, Singha, to his enemies, and to make a suitable provision for Múta Samy, if the Viceroyalty were given to himself by the British. These were the very proposals formerly offered by the British, and were now only renewed to lull General Macdowall into security. They had the desired effect. The general was rash enough to trust that a man would be true to his enemies who had proved false to his country; and before the stipulations were fulfilled, he led a large proportion of his troops to Colombo, sending Colonel Barbut back to Trincomalee, and leaving an officer, incapable of command, Major Davie, in charge of the garrison at Kandy (about 1500 strong), with the unfortunate Múta Samy.

All the subsequent disasters are to be traced to this fatal proceeding. No sooner had the respective detachments reached their stations, than Talawe, still further to delude the authorities at Colombo, held a conference with Mr.

North, at which the treaty was ratified, and a *promise* made to deliver up the unfortunate Singha within a stated period. Now it was that Major Davie ought to have found out the necessity for some measure, on his part, to ward off approaching danger. Large bodies of armed men were seen concentrating in the neighbourhood of Kandy ; the stragglers from the town were being cut off, and every thing portended a determination on the part of the natives to make a vigorous attack upon the capital.

Yet the most supine indifference was betrayed by its defenders, until at length a formidable attack was made upon the town. This the garrison was unprepared for, and it was with some difficulty that their commander could obtain an armistice, in which he proposed a surrender : the conditions of the surrender were, that the town should be delivered up, with all its military stores and baggage, and that the troops (about 1500 strong), with their arms alone, should proceed to Trincomalee. The same evening the melancholy march was commenced, one hundred and twenty-six soldiers in hospital being left to the

barbarity of their enemies, every one of whom was murdered.

From Kandy to the ford of the Mahavelli river, on the road to Trincomalee, is a distance of about three miles. When they arrived at it, the river was found to be so swollen by the late rains, as to render passage without boats impossible. These, however, were not to be obtained. Major Davie and his little band stood in irresolution on the bank, whilst their taunting enemies occupied the hills around.

Next morning, negotiations were renewed; and such was the destitute condition of the force, that the Kandians had the effrontery to demand the surrender of Múta Samy for torture and murder, as the price of their assistance to enable them to pass the river! whilst, more extraordinary still, Major Davie had the barbarity to comply with their demand! Múta Samy, the unfortunate victim of what I grieve to call by its right name, British treachery, was delivered to the barbarians, and suffered the agonizing and lingering death of impalement. Will it be believed that this was done—this act of treachery consummated—before

the Kandians had fulfilled their part of the unhallowed compact? Múta Samy was in their power, was already suffering for having received British protection, whilst the pusillanimous Davie, with the men he had the misfortune to command, were still on the left bank of the river. He asked for the fulfilment of their agreement; they laughed at his folly, and proposed that he should conduct his troops unarmed back to Kandy. What were they to do there? Davie knew not. What hope of safety did that hold out? none whatever; and yet the wretched man agreed to it without consulting his brother officers, without informing the troops of his being about to offer them up as a sacrifice to his insensate folly or cowardice, and Kandian cruelty. The fatal order was given—"Ground your arms!"—the soldiers, ignorant of the compact agreed upon, did so, nor did the officers dare openly to resist, although they remonstrated with their superior. The arms were removed by the Kandians, the soldiers marched into a defile, the three superior officers, Major Davie, Captain Rumley, and Captain Humphreys, were separated from them, and the unfortu-

nate force was then murdered—butchered in cold blood—unarmed and defenceless as the men were, by the mercenary Kaffirs in the Kandian army. Major Davie and his brother officers lingered on, and at length died in hopeless captivity.

It is related in Ceylon, although I cannot vouch for the truth of the report, that on the occupation of the interior in 1815, Davie was still alive, but, aware of the execrations heaped on his head by his fellow-countrymen in the island, dared not reveal himself, and lived with a Singhalese wife in the savage style of a native in the remote part of the large tract to the east of Kandy, called Bintenne, where even at the present day the face of a white man is not seen once, perhaps, for many years.

There was in the whole transaction but one redeeming trait, and that was in the conduct of a Malay officer, Nouradin by name, who happened then to be with Major Davie. The abilities and energy of Nouradin were known to Talawe, and he, in consequence, made him the most splendid offers if he would consent to desert the British service. This Nouradin refused to do; and even when the force had

been captured, and the same proposals renewed, with the information that his refusal of their acceptance would be followed by instant death, his answer was, that he preferred *that*, to treachery and desertion. He was immediately afterwards beheaded.

The retaking of their capital proportionably elevated the spirits and hopes of the Kandians, and the war which succeeded these events, and continued unremittingly during 1803-4, and 5, was conducted by them with more than their ordinary vigour. It was a desultory series of partial actions on the confines of the British territory ; nor did it present any feature, save the extraordinary march of Major Johnson, to merit particular detail.

This expedition was one of the most remarkable which occurred during the whole war, and forcibly illustrates what could be done against such enemies by a small force under a resolute commander. With a body of three hundred men, he marched first from Batticaloa, on the eastern coast, to Kandy, a distance, probably, of ninety miles, the greater part of which march lay through the territories of the Kandians, and was defended by their troops.

Arrived there, he found the force he expected to co-operate with him from Colombo had been otherwise engaged, and that the hills surrounding the town (exactly as on the former occasion) were occupied by the enemy. The town is situated in a valley completely encircled by hills, and—with a small lake, partly artificial, in its immediate vicinity,—completely fills up the valley. To remain there, subject to continual attacks, would have been to risk the gradual destruction of his force, and its slightest diminution would have left little hope of safety. He was therefore obliged to undertake the same march which Major Davie, with a superior force, had been unable to accomplish, and that in the face of an enemy, rendered confident by the late massacre. His little band took the road to Trincomalee, one hundred and thirteen miles distant, fought their way along, crossed the river, notwithstanding the utmost opposition of the enemy, and continued their march, day after day, subject to constant attacks both by day and night, until he brought the majority of his gallant little army safe into the fort of Trincomalee.

In 1805 an armistice was proposed by the king, which the English governor did not oppose, and this, without any formal treaty, lasted till 1814. In the mean time, however, the proceedings at Kandy demand our attention. It is not to be supposed that Wikrama and Pilame Talawe could continue on the same footing as had formerly subsisted between them. On the cessation of hostilities, the king was determined to shake off the yoke of his Adigar, and shewed this determination so openly as seriously to alarm Talawe. A proposition of the minister's, to marry his son to the natural daughter of the king, was the cause of his dismissal from his offices and honours to retirement in his own district. This Talawe could not patiently endure—he accordingly fomented a rebellion, failed in his enterprise, was apprehended, and beheaded. This occurred in 1812, the same year that Mr. North was succeeded at Colombo by Sir Robert Brownrigg.

On the death of Talawe, Eheylapola, who had been second Adigar, was appointed to succeed him, but did not long escape the jealousy of the king. In self-defence, Eheyl-



lapola excited an insurrection in Suffragam, but was defeated by Molligodde (the king's general, and now second Adigar), and fled to the English. Wikrama's rage was ungovernable when he heard of this escape, and with the barbarity of a savage, it was visited on all whom suspicion could taint. One circumstance, the last and crowning act of barbarity, will suffice. The final scene of this domestic barbarity was horrible in the extreme, and, if I wound the feelings of my readers by relating it, I must be excused for my strict adherence to truth,—*προς ταυτα κρυπτε μηδεν*. The unfortunate wife and children of Ehey-lapola were still in Kandy, and under the power of the inhuman tyrant whose actions I am relating. They were condemned to die. Before one of the temples of the gods, in the market-place of Kandy, they were doomed to suffer, and were led forth by the gaoler who had them in charge. The lady advanced to meet her fate with resolution; she proclaimed the legality of her lord's conduct, and her own innocence, and hoped that the present sacrifice might be for his good. She then told her eldest son, a lad of eleven years, to submit to

his fate ; the poor infant recoiled with horror from the sacrifice, when his noble brother, two years younger, stepped forwards with a determined mien, and told him *he* would shew him how to die. *One* blow was struck, and the head of the youthful hero was rolling at their feet ; the barbarity was not to end here, however. The severed head was thrown into a rice mortar, the pestle was placed in the hand of the unfortunate mother, and she was told that if she refused to use it, *she should be disgracefully tortured*. The poor woman stood for a moment in irresolution, but disgrace was worse than any inward struggle. She lifted the pestle up, and once she let it fall. One by one the same harrowing scene was repeated, until all were gone, and at last the poor infant at her breast was torn from its resting-place, where, in unconscious innocence, it knew nothing of the awful scene that was transacting around it. It, too, was beheaded, and the milk which it had just received, flowed forth to mingle with its blood.

What an awful recital !—who can portray to themselves the poor mother standing irresolute, under such a dreadful trial, without

feeling the liveliest pity at her fate, and the strongest resentment against her heartless persecutor? What must have been the agony of that temporary irresolution, which was only ended by her inflicting a blow upon the lifeless and bleeding head of her own son! Whatever may be the evils of the British power in Ceylon, we may yet congratulate ourselves with the certainty that it can never sanction cruelty such as this.

In the latter part of 1814, the barbarous treatment of some native merchants from the coast, by the Kandian tyrant, caused an interruption of the amicable relations between the two powers in possession of Ceylon. Compensation was again refused, and in January of the succeeding year, a considerable force was again moved towards Kandy. In the proclamation sent forth by the British government at the commencement of this final invasion, a very just distinction was drawn between the tyrant himself and the population (noble as well as plebeian) of the districts he governed. In that document it was distinctly declared that the expedition was against the tyrant and his power, not against the people

whom he called his subjects. Numbers of the more influential chiefs came over to the British on the occasion, and every thing portended the conclusion of the authority of the Singha race in Ceylon. Even Molligodde, the king's prime minister, and the only general of ability whom he possessed, as soon as he had succeeded in placing his family beyond the reach of Wikrama, came over to the invading force, and lent his utmost exertions to second their intention.

On the 14th February, the head-quarters of General Brownrigg were established in Kandy: no resistance was attempted,—deserted by his own subjects, and only defended by his Malabar body guard, the king was obliged to fly, without having even the hope of effectual resistance to cheer him. Measures for his immediate pursuit were instantly taken—two days after the entrance of the British force into Kandy, his wives and treasures were captured, and two days afterwards (on the 18th) a party of Eheylapola's followers discovered the king himself. His guard fought bravely in his defence, but were overpowered by numbers, and finally Wikrama fell

into the hands of that man whom of all others he had most deeply injured.

Eheylapola was not backward in shewing his enmity to his conquered oppressor. The king was bound hand and foot, and treated with every indignity, till rescued by the British, who released him from his bonds, and shewed, in their subsequent conduct towards him, something of the courtesy of civilized warfare. The following year he was conveyed to Madras, and thence to Vellore, where he died on the 30th of January, 1832, of a dropsy. Such was the fate of the last independent king of Ceylon,—the last scion of a family which had governed the island for two thousand three hundred years !

No time was lost by General Brownrigg in taking measures for an immediate settlement of the government of the country. A conference was held in the audience hall of the palace of Kandy, on the 2nd of March, between the British general and the late prime minister, together with the other principal officers of Kandy, at which Sri Wikrama Rajah Singha was formally deposed, his family and relatives for ever debarred from the throne,

and all the claims of his race declared to be extinguished. The country was declared to be henceforth under the government of the British sovereign—the laws of the country still in force—and the usual royal dues and revenues still to be levied for the support of government. Such were the principal heads of the treaty, by virtue of which the British power was recognized throughout the entire of the island.

The Kandian chiefs were not yet prepared, however, thus peaceably to surrender their authority. For two years they silently made preparations for a final struggle, and in 1817 the standard of rebellion was unfurled; a priest of the royal family became a competitor for the crown, and in a few months it was evident that the British must either relinquish their authority, or re-conquer the country. Every district of the interior was soon in open insurrection—the small detachments of the British forces scattered over the interior were cut off, and but for dissension amongst the Singhalese chiefs, Kandy must have been evacuated.

When this measure was in contemplation,

news was brought of another aspirant for the throne having appeared—the former one was captured by his opponents, and thus—their enemies disunited and destroying each other,—the British found little difficulty in gradually winning back their lost ground. Nothing could be more destructive to the country than the state of things in 1818. A war of extermination was carried on in every quarter by the three contending powers. Districts were laid waste—villages burnt—the inhabitants slaughtered, and the crops destroyed ; and this, not in one quarter alone, but over nearly two thirds of the extent of the island. At length the principal native chiefs on both sides were captured—the war became fitful and irregular, until an event occurred, which at once put an end to the contest—the capture of the celebrated Dalada relic, the tooth of Budha. When it was known that this relic, the most precious thing in the world in Singhalese estimation, was in the hands of the British, resistance was at an end.

In a convention held shortly after in Kandy, at which Sir R. Brownrigg presided, the interior was finally placed under British juris-

diction. Thus was one of the fairest gems added to the crown of England—"the pearl-drop on the brow of India," "the emerald isle of the East."

Into its history under its British masters it is not my intention to enter here ; suffice it to say, that, with occasional and partial checks, it has been making rapid progress in wealth, civilization, and general prosperity.

THE END.



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# TURKEY;

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SIR JAMES PORTER, BY HIS GRANDSON,

SIR GEORGE LARPENT, BART., &c.

"At the present moment, when the interest felt about Turkey and the Osmanli is, if possible, heightened by the gallant resistance they have offered to the array of their northern foe, it will hardly be necessary to offer any apology for the publication of the present volumes, which are intended to give a full and comprehensive account of Turkey, past and present, and to show what hopes may be formed as to the permanent regeneration and progress of our ancient ally.

"In pursuance of this object, no better materials could be possibly found than the documents and correspondence which form the basis of these volumes. Sir James Porter was for many years English Envoy at Constantinople, and during his residence at that Court he took advantage of every opportunity to make himself thoroughly acquainted with the manners and customs of the extraordinary nation with which he was brought into contact. The materials left by him, relative to Turkey, have been incorporated in the first volume of this work; and the reader, by a comparison of the past with the actual state of Turkey, as described in the second volume, will be enabled fully to understand the remarkable changes which have been effected during the course of the present century."—*Extract from the Preface.*

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